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# MACLEAN'S

DEC. 29th 2008

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SPECIAL REPORT

# 7 DAYS THAT SHOOK THE NATION

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CONSERVATIVES voiced natural outrage over giving the Bloc power over government

# Why Canadians rejected the coalition

The fate of the coalition agreement between departing Liberal Leader Stéphane Dion and the NDP's Jack Layton, with support from Gilles Duceppe of the Bloc Québécois, is looking increasingly uncertain. But just days ago it seemed a much surer thing, and Prime Minister Stephen Harper attacked the coalition with particular vigour.

During question period, Harper accused Dion of "a betrayal of the best interests of our country" by forming a coalition with separatist support. A Conservative radio ad blitz argued the coalition would place "the balance of power in the hands of the separatist Bloc." Harper's critics claimed such aggressive attacks on the Bloc component of the coalition would destroy his own party's chances in Quebec and tear the country apart. The editorial board at the *Toronto Star* accused Harper of provoking "a national unity crisis to go along with the economic storm." The *Globe and Mail* claimed "Harper is weaker because of the coalition" and that his negative tactics would cost him support in Quebec. Nothing of the sort has occurred.

The primary failing of the Liberal-NDP-Bloc cause is that it provides none of the stability, nor the popular legitimacy, required by a country facing difficult economic times. The Conservatives have rightly given voice to the natural outrage felt by Canadians from all parts of the country over the possibility that separatists might be handed the levers of power in a deal cooked up outside the ballot box. Certainly, the Bloc has an unquestioned right to participate in federal politics as representatives of their electorate. It is far better to have Quebec separatists debating inside the House of Commons than agitating and protesting outside it. Duceppe participates in English-language leaders' television debates and his party even held the title of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition from 1993 to 1997.

That said, it is something quite different to see a party committed to the destruction of the country given the whip hand in government. If such a fine distinction escaped the *Globe* and *Star*, other Canadians recognized it instantly. Harper's instinctive grasp of this fact shows him to be more in tune with the spirit of the country than anyone in opposition. That's why recent polls have shown a significant rise in the government's popularity in the wake of the opposition's attempt to seize power.

As for Conservative support in Quebec, the situation hardly appears dire. In the October election, Harper's Conservatives took 22 per cent of the popular vote in Quebec. Post-prorogation polls put Conservative support in the province at 24 per cent. So Harper finds himself at least as popular in Quebec as he was during the election, despite his condemnation of the Bloc. The fact Quebec Liberal Leader Jean Charest won a majority in this week's provincial election further suggests Quebecers are in the mood for stability over sovereignty.

Defending the country's integrity appears to have done Harper no harm in Quebec and to have improved his prospects everywhere else. Despite all the alarm to the contrary, the coalition appears to have unified the country, just not in the way its promoters expected. M



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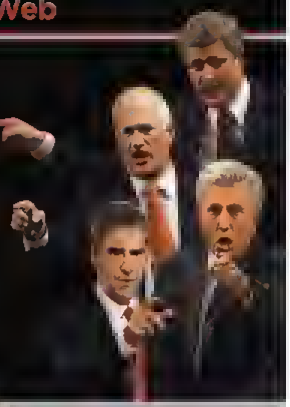
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## This week on the Web



### Notes on a crisis

Parliament may be suspended, but things are as political as ever in Ottawa. Our bloggers are working overtime to give you the latest news and analysis every day.
macleans.ca/capitalread

Test your political IQ—and learn a few things about how Canada's parliamentary system works—by doing our quiz.
macleans.ca/ottawaquiz

## BLOG CENTRAL



**INKLESS WELLS**
"Nobody takes what this government does as a *government* seriously. All the opposition had to do was come up with a better alternative. They have failed. This is a depressing moment in our nation's politics."
macleans.ca/wells



**ANDREW COYNE**
"When the Tories remind voters who tried to 'steal' the election, who was 'in bed with the separatists,' who would have let Jack Layton loose in the cabinet, they will make Iggy wear it just as surely as they would Rae or Dion."
macleans.ca/coyne



**BEYOND THE COMMONS**
"The last serious politician? What was Irwin Cotler doing while all of Ottawa was imploding? Writing about Omar Khadr and Iran."
macleans.ca/wherry



**TV GUIDANCE**
"*Mad Men* is better, but in terms of its cultural significance, *Two and a Half Men* probably has more to say about who we are and what we want to be."
macleans.ca/wainman

### READER COMMENT OF THE WEEK

Canadian political coronations always go so well—just ask Kim Campbell and Paul Martin." —Greg

## WEB POLL RESULTS

**We picked Barack Obama. Who is your Newsmaker of the Year for 2008?**

We made the right call with Obama 65.19%
Stephen Harper 11.11%
Sarah Palin 9.63%
The Big Three 5.19%
Tina Fey 4.44%
Hillary Clinton 1.48%
Henry Paulson 1.48%
Julie Couillard 1.48%

THIS WEEK'S POLL: macleans.ca/poll

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Comments are open on every story and post. So tell our writers what you think.

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**Week in pictures**
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Maclean's, estab. 1st 1905, is published weekly, except for occasional combined, expanded or premium issues, which count as two subscription issues, by Rogers Publishing Limited, a division of Rogers Media Inc. Rogers Publishing Limited, One Mount Pleasant Road, Toronto, Ont. M4Y 2Y5. Montreal office: 1200 avenue McGill College, Bureau 800, Montreal, Que. H3B 4G7

Maclean's ISSN 0024-9982. Full subscription price for one year is $66.04 plus applicable taxes; U.S.A., $95.00 surface; all other countries, $229.00 airmail.



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Undeliverable articles and change of address notices to: Maclean's, P.O. Box 660, Station Main, Markham, Ont. L3P 8A8

Publications Mail Agreement No. 40070230. Registration No. 09873

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada, through the Publications Assistance Program (PAP) and the Canada Magazine Fund, toward our mailing and editorial costs.

U.S. POSTMASTER:
Periodicals postage paid at Niagara Falls, N.Y. USPS 186710; Office: 2424 Niagara Falls Blvd, Niagara Falls, NY 14304-1662. Send address changes (form 3579) to Maclean's, P.O. Box 4545, Buffalo, NY 14240

Printed in Canada by Quebecor World Inc.

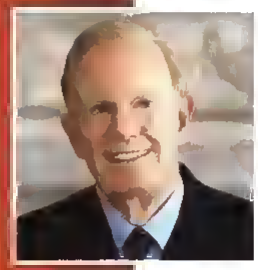

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# Ted Rogers

1933-2008



Innovation was in your blood.

And so you built a company

that embraced it.

You broadened and enriched

our world of entertainment.

You changed the very way we connect.

You introduced us to a universe

of information and infinite possibilities.

You set the pace with an energy

that never wavered.

With foresight, integrity and

your legendary grit, you forged

a legacy in which we all take pride.

Yet still, you never missed

an opportunity to remind us

that the best is yet to come.

Rest assured Ted,

we will not let you down.

With heavy hearts, your friends and family

at Rogers Communications



# 'Why would you print a letter that compares Justin Trudeau to Barack Obama?'

## CAR TROUBLES

YOU HIT the nail on the head in your assessment of the "Big Three" companies ("The decline of the North American car," Business, Dec 1). While the quality control prophet W.E. Deming was helping to revolutionize the Japanese auto industry in the late 1940s, domestic auto companies rebuffed his talk of continuous improvement and quality through leadership and workmanship. While he has been regarded as a hero in Japan for the past 50 years, it wasn't until the 1980s that Detroit came calling—and the race had long been lost by that time. The hubris and navel-gazing of the Big Three is most evident in their passion for impotent designs and vehicles devoid of entertainment value (post-1990s Cadillacs and Corvettes excepted). As a car guy, this incompetence angers me because there is no reason that we couldn't "do it here," like the Japanese or Germans.
*Collin Sawatzky, Kelowna, B.C.*

ENOUGH ALREADY! Haven't we pumped enough money into the auto industry in the past for bailouts that only lace the pockets of the rich? This sort of corporate welfare has to stop. Who wins in the long run? It's a joke to bail out a cash cow—an industry that holds countries for ransom with threats of up to 900,000 employees out of work. The only thing those employees will have to lose is the big salary they were overpaid with in the first place. I predict that without the government making the same mistake by providing more corporate welfare, most of that estimated 900,000 unemployed will find work and be better prepared for their future.
*Bill Gardner, Quinte West, Ont.*

I'VE READ WITH interest your special report on the decline and crash of the auto industry in North America. I believe that big auto has been its own worst enemy and, as a result, I do not support a taxpayer bailout of the industry. If anyone is to bail out big auto then it should be someone with an aligned interest and a lot of money, like big oil.
*John W. Cook, Victoria*

THANK YOU for Andrew Coyne's crisp description of the damage that subsidies have done to the North American auto industry ("The real reason a Big Three bailout is a bad idea," Opinion, Dec. 1). But we North Americans voted for the inefficient production of inefficient vehicles with our wallets. While Europeans consumed less fuel and produced fewer greenhouse emissions by driving smaller vehicles, we traded our cars in for SUVs, pickups or minivans until gas prices finally rendered them cost-prohibitive. Europeans enjoy excellent performance in their vehicles through advanced small engine technologies like hybrid drives, clean diesel, direct injection and turbocharging. European manufacturers don't even make some of these engines available here. We're shortsighted and stuck in our ways.




By and large, we've asked for what our auto industry has delivered.
*Mike Rooks, Burlington, Ont.*

## SAY WHAT YOU MEAN

I READ WITH great sadness "Using the right words for the right reason" (From the Editors, Dec. 1). The murder of 16-year old Aqsa Parvez was an honour killing, and feminists do their sisters a great disservice by trying to pretend it was run-of-the-mill family violence. As a woman who has worked for the last 40 years to help prevent violence against women and children, I am appalled that the federal government is not asking certain patriarchal immigrant groups to abide by Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which guarantees equality to women. Hobbled by political correctness, politicians prefer to look the other way, resulting in the slow but steady spread of misogynistic practices that affect not only Canada but also Europe. The hijab is a symbol of female subjugation, and in Canada the sad death of Aqsa Parvez underlines this truth. In the meantime, it is the duty of mainstream citizens and the media (thank God for *Maclean's*!) to stand firm against the false charges of racism, and to speak out against the growing spread of misogyny in its many subtle and ugly forms.
*Jancis M. Andrews, Sechelt, B.C.*

SURELY IT IS about time we agreed that characterizing the native inhabitants of North America as savages is, and always was, inappropriate. These "savages" skilfully enabled explorers to both survive and make a fortune in the fur trade—a fortune that helped finance the endless tribal wars of Europe. As stated in your editorial, "there was plenty of savagery to go around back then."
*Robert Verrall, Montreal*

## THIS IS FOR A GOOD CAUSE

THE NAME Justin Trudeau makes me sick. Why would you print a letter to the editor that would compare him to Barack Obama? It is very obvious who you vote for. For the record, if Andrew Coyne and Paul Wells are so f--king smart then why don't they run the country? I'm sure both of them foresaw this global meltdown and are now independently wealthy. One day it will be known that Stephen Harper was one of the best prime ministers that Canada ever had. I'll give you $5,000 or donate this amount to any charity of your choice if you print this letter in its entirety. Have a wonderful day.
*Craig Miller, Edmonton*

## UNITING LEFT AIN'T RIGHT

THE IDEA OF merging the NDP with the Liberals is even more disastrous than Andrew Potter thunks ("Forget big tent: unite the left is more like big top," Opinion, Dec. 1). There is nothing left-wing about the Liberals. It is a party that flows with the political wind. The Liberals are crying foul because the NDP regained its traditional base. The Liberals were unprepared for a reunited right and an ascending Green party. A merger would mean the NDP would be under the thumb of the Liberals. If the Liberals want progressive votes, they should earn them.
*Drew Howard, Victoria*

## THE SECRET TO SUCCESS

MALCOLM GLADWELL'S book excerpt on how human excellence is achieved was fascinating ("How to be a success," Society, Dec. 1). Given the understanding that the mastery of a complex task requires time, practice, opportunity and parental support (something many parents intuitively understand), it is nothing short of astounding that our society continues to saddle our children with enormous loads of daily homework, all the while defending this unfounded practice as "good for them." If we want our kids to succeed, we need to allow them to discover their passions and give them the time and encouragement to find what really matters to them.
*Louisa Lawson, Port Albern, B.C.*

## ACT YOUR AGE!

THE CLAIM THAT "Net geners" are "deeply self-obsessed, needy, ambitious, impatient and undisciplined" is unfair ("Is this the future? Don't bet on it," Business, Dec. 1). Let's compare the faults of those born after 1980 ("Net geners" or NGs) to those born before 1980 ("Old Farts" or OFs). NGs try to recycle in big cities like Calgary, run by OFs who have yet to see the need to develop curbside recycling. NGs wake up late, but show up to work on foot or by bicycle, braving road systems built by OFs that are dangerous for cyclists and crowded with OFs commuting alone in their SUVs. The legacy the OFs will leave the NGs is that of debt, pollution, waste, mismanagement and an economy built on unsustainable values, both social and environmental.
*Matthew Breakey, Calgary*

WHAT A SPOT-ON article! As a teacher at a private "college preparatory" school in Florida, I see the rampant narcissism Steve Maich is referring to every day. It has now become multi-generational. The parents of these kids, many of whom were spoiled themselves and who generally are shielded from the current economic downturn, simply live in a fantasy land. My children attend public school and the expectation gap is vast. They have standardized tests and work for their grades. There is little of that in private education. I get irritated when the words "talent" and "creativity" get thrown around as if years of practice and hard work don't contribute to success in a competitive field. I am going to make a copy of your article available to our administration. They won't get it, but it'll give me some latent passive aggressive satisfaction!
*Gary Compton, Wesley Chapel, Fla.*

## BABY BLUES

I WAS DISCOURAGED there was no mention of the South Vancouver Birth Program in your article "A midwife crisis" (Health, Dec. 1). I have served on its advisory committee since its inception and have been thrilled and amazed with its inclusiveness and success. We offer the most comprehensive program for expecting mothers that is available in Canada and assist some 350 mothers each year with their birth process. Please give praise where it is warranted.
*Bert Massiah, Vancouver*

## PAIN TOLERANCE

YOUR PHOTO OF the three women gagged with pink ribbons struck a resounding chord with me ("The angry breast cancer survivors," Books, Dec. 1). If I had the money, I would reproduce this photo on billboards all over North America! As a four year survivor of breast cancer who still can't return to work, I recently had the experience of being laughed at by an otherwise very compassionate anesthesiologist at a pain clinic when I used the word "chemobrain." It is not just the desire to hear upbeat stories that creates the "cone of silence", the heavy funding of research, information and support groups by drug companies is partly to blame. Our free monthly breast cancer newsletter in B.C. is funded by 11 drug companies. What incentive is there to publish comments highlighting the serious side effects of cancer drugs?
*Jennifer Smith, Trail, B.C.*

JUST READ Anne Kingston's story on post-cancer anger and don't know what to say except finally! Hallelujah! Since 1996, I have been dealing with the aftermath of non Hodgkin's lymphoma. In many ways I'm "fine" and I am grateful to be alive. But I have found living after the cure much harder than living with the disease. There's fatigue, "chemobrain," joint pain, mouth sores. There are strange reactions to drugs that used to be easy for me to take. The hardest thing is that it's not taken seriously by the medical profession. For every Lance Armstrong, there are a lot of ordinary folks whose post-cancer stories are not so glamorous, exciting or successful. It is time for a new branch of medicine to be formed, one dedicated to helping survivors cope with the years after cancer.
*Sharon Wetselaar, Victoria*


'FOR EVERY Lance Armstrong there are post-cancer stories that aren't so glamorous'

## IN PASSING

**William Gibson**, 94, playwright. Best known for *The Miracle Worker*, a biography of the young deaf-mute Helen Keller, he wrote more than a dozen plays, including the Broadway hit *Two for the Seesaw*.

**Jørn Utzon**, 90, architect. Often cited with Frank Lloyd Wright and Alvar Aalto as one of the 20th century's iconic architects, he was best known for designing Australia's Sydney Opera House in 1957. He quit the project mid-construction in 1966 over cost and design detail disputes. The structure was not completed until 1973.

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY ADAM CHOLEWA

**MACLEAN'S BESTSELLERS LIST** will return to our magazine pages next week. To check out this week's list please visit **macleans.ca/bestsellers**

**NOTE:** In the **Canadien Diabetes Association** supplement "Diabetes and your ticking heart" published on December 1 2008 incorrect information appeared on page 13. Correct information appears below.

**Diagnostic criteria for diabetes**

- Fasting plasma glucose of greater than or equal to 7.0 mmol/L
*OR*
- Casual plasma glucose of greater than or equal to 11.1 mmol/L plus symptoms of diabetes
*OR*
- Plasma glucose 2 hours after 75 g glucose challenge of greater than or equal to 11.1 mmol/L



7 DAYS

## A WEEK IN THE LIFE OF OLIVER EDWARDS-NEIL

**On Sunday, the Australian pilot-trainee and his Danish co-worker, Troels Hasen, took off from Wabush, Labrador, on a cross-polar journey to ferry a plane from the U.S. to Sweden. Hours later, both engines failed, they crashed on an ice floe off Baffin Island, and the aircraft promptly sank. On Monday, after a frigid 18 hours worrying about polar bears, the pair were rescued by a passing shrimp boat. On Tuesday, they gave interviews from their warm hospital beds in Iqaluit.**

## Good news

### Endgames

The self-declared mastermind behind 9/11, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, and four of his fellow terrorists made surprise admissions of guilt in a Guantánamo Bay courtroom this week. But their prideful claims of responsibility were designed to score PR points, as was their request to bypass trials and face execution. Barack Obama has already vowed to shut down George Bush's pointless Cuban stockade and have suspects face open justice. He should now demonstrate another Western value—mercy—by ensuring they go to jail, not the death chamber. Let's not give al-Qaeda any more "martyrs."

### Aging gracefully

Don't fear Father Time. According to new research out of the U.S., the average senior citizen actually feels 13 years younger than his real age. (70 is the new 57!) Another study found empty nesters make the happiest couples because a kid-free home is a stress-free home. As the lead author said: "The message for couples with young children is, 'Hang in there.'" Just don't spend your retirement in Australia. Hospitals there are reporting an alarming increase in "granny dumping"—people dropping their elderly relatives at emergency rooms while they go away on vacation.

### Just desserts

It was a week chock-full of comeuppance. Sean "Sloppy Seconds" Avery, hockey's reigning lout, got a six-game suspension for publicly insulting his ex-girlfriend, actress Elisha Cuthbert. O.J. Simpson, acquitted of double murder in 1995, is finally facing some serious jail time—up to 33 years—for kidnapping and armed robbery. And in Sydney, a five-year-old boy has been duly chastened for throwing his apple core at a bus driver's head. The punishment? He must now wake up before sunrise and walk to school with his father. All 13 km.

### The solutions people

The future of high-end, sexy automobiles is blazing fast, totally earth-friendly, and even better, based in North America. While the titans of Detroit were in Washington begging for billions, Silicon Valley's new car geniuses were heating up competition. Tesla Motors has 70 owners behind the wheel of its US$109,000 all-electric roadster (which does zero to 60 mph in about four seconds) and 1,200 on the waiting list. Archrival Fisker Automotive plans to unveil its Karma sports car next month in Detroit and promises to have models on the road by the end of 2009—at a price tag of US$87,000. Next up for both companies, a luxury sedan to rival the BMW 7 Series. Who says the American auto industry is dead?

## Bad news

### Dying out there

Describing this as a bad week in Afghanistan understates how far, and how quickly, the NATO mission has backslid within a few critical days. First, a roadside bomb killed three Canadian soldiers, pushing this country's death toll past the bleak milestone of 100. Days later, Taliban militants torched more than 150 NATO transport trucks in a coordinated attack near Pesha war, Pakistan, cutting off vital supplies for the international forces. Finally, a London-based think tank reported that the Taliban now have a permanent presence in fully 72 per cent of the country, up from 54 per cent a year ago. Canada's reasons for joining this mission haven't changed: Afghanistan required liberation and protection from cruel theocrats, who had trans formed the country into a launch pad for global terrorism. But that cause now hangs on the dim hope that a bolstered U.S. presence can turn things around, while Ottawa's next move is complicated. Yes, Canada remains committed to the cause of restoring order in Afghanistan. But our military commitment expires in 2011, and to make any future role meaningful, we and our allies must get back to the point where we're taking the battle to the Taliban, rather than vice versa.

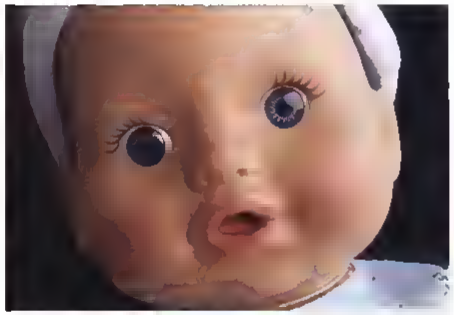
### Feet, not treats

More proof that the root cause of the child obesity epidemic is a lack of common sense. A new study by Université de Montréal researchers found that only 30 per cent of kids in two Quebec cities walk or bike to school, and among those who don't get a lift, 80 per cent travel less than 600 m. Meanwhile, as the recession deepens, worldwide sales for McDonald's and other fast-food chains are steadily growing, as consumers seek cheaper eats—often at the drive-through as they take advantage of tumbling fuel prices. Come on people, for the sake of the kids, let's all take a stroll and grab a salad instead.

### Workplace hazards

Death by trampling isn't the only drawback to working at Wal-Mart—or any other department store. According to a new survey, 70 per cent of retail employees have been verbally abused by a customer over the past 12 months. Thirty per cent have been threatened, and one in 10 was assaulted. Too bad those clerks and cashiers don't work for the federal government. A separate study conducted by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business found public sector employees earn up to 17 per cent more, on average, than their private sector counterparts. As the economy sinks, bureaucrats crying foul over the Harper government's proposals to rein in public sector pay hikes should remember how good they have it. M

## FACE OF THE WEEK



**BABY'S FIRST WORDS** Fisher-Price's Little Mommy Cuddle & Coo doll gurgles, giggles and—to some ears—says 'Islam is the light'

PHOTOGRAPH BY IVAN




# MITCHEL RAPHAEL ON BOB RAE AND THE MARIJUANA PARTY, AND THAT 'HOSTAGE' VIDEO

### OSAMA BIN LADEN HAS BETTER VIDEOS

Conservatives were literally crying with laughter in the House foyer when Stéphane Dion's poor quality video aired in response to Stephen Harper's address to the nation. One PMO insider noted, "How come Osama bin Laden can record better videos in caves?" Others referred to Dion's effort as looking like "a hostage video." The current crisis had rookie Toronto MP Rob Oliphant tell the Liberal caucus, "I am praying more in my new job than in my old one." Oliphant is a United Church minister. Over in Justin Trudeau's office, staff were getting calls from people opposed to the Liberal-NDP coalition. Strangely, a lot of them were from the same phone number. Toronto Liberal MP Carolyn Bennett came up with one of the Liberals' zingers on the PM's proroguing of Parliament. "It was like pulling the fire alarm before an exam you were going to fail." As for the prorogued decision itself, the PM's communications director, Kory Teneycke, said he would not be breathing a word about what happened when Harper met with Michaëlle Jean—even the non-political stuff. So forget about finding out if the PM's water had a lemon wedge in it. Or if he even had water. On an alarming note, NDP MP Nathan Cullen had a billboard with his MP info on it torched in his B.C. riding. The sign had been up for years, he said.




SANTA at the pro-coalition rally in Toronto; (clockwise from Santa) Justin Trudeau and Elizabeth May; Michael Ignatieff; Mary Walsh; Stephen Harper; Jack Layton and Stéphane Dion behind the scenes at the Toronto rally, (insets) Feist, Bob Rae poster

### ISN'T THAT THE MARIJUANA PARTY'S SLOGAN?

Bob Rae watched the PM address the nation from a Wonderful Wednesday Liberal event he hosted at Ottawa's Metropolitan Brasserie Restaurant. Rae had his new leadership posters—now collector's items no doubt—on the wall. The slogan on them was "Ready to roll," prompting one young Grit to ask, "Isn't that the Marijuana party's slogan?" (It was actually "Let's Roll," in the 2004 election.)

### WHY WOMEN HAVE A PROBLEM IN OTTAWA

Mary Walsh hosted a pro-coalition rally in Toronto with Jack Layton, Stéphane Dion, and big-name musical guests including Juno Award sensation Feist and Santa Claus holding a sign saying, "All I want for Christmas is co-operative government." Fiddler Ashley MacIsaac was wandering amund the crowd saying he wasn't in favour of the coalition but he was supporting the Liberals. The huge crowd started going all Barack Obama, shouting, "Yes we can." Walsh tried to change the chanting to "Yes we Can-ada." That night at a Smiling Land Foundation cancer fundraiser, she explained why so few women are involved in this parliamentary political pandemonium. "It's so hard to keep the makeup on *both* faces," she said.

### JUSTIN'S FULL GLASS

The 2008 press gallery dinner at the Museum of Civilization had no satirical speeches by party leaders, thus ending a tradition. Only two leaders even showed up: the NDP's Jack Layton and the Greens' Elizabeth May. Since the coalition to oust Harper was established, May says Layton has been calling her. In the past, she notes, he has been frosty. Now, she explains, the other parties need the Greens' support. The press gallery dinner suddenly became a very popular event when word of the coalition got out: the press gallery's phones started lighting up like crazy with people scrambling for tickets the day before. At the dinner, Justin Trudeau left without touching his wine. Capital Diary learned that when he's out Trudeau accepts the first glass of wine offered by waiters and then does not drink it to avoid being asked if he needs a refill. Trudeau says he rarely drinks. Then again, he is only a rookie MP. Radio-Canada's Daniel Lessard hosted the event and got some great jokes in, such as his observation that former Liberal leadership rivals Michael Ignatieff and Bob Rae were seated next to each other in the House, "which is the closest they have been since that experimental night in college [when they were roommates]."

**ON THE WEB.** For more Ottawa outtakes or to contact Mitchel Raphael, visit **macleans.ca/mitchelraphael**

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MITCHEL RAPHAEL, SEAN KILPATRICK/CP

# Parliament in chaos—just how Harper likes it



PAUL WELLS

Circle your calendars! Jan. 26 is Back-to-Parliament Day. That's when your MPs will reconvene in Ottawa for another! Fun! Few! Days! of recrimination and bitter, bitter resentment. There will be a Throne Speech. It will require that all MPs not named Harper sleep on beds of spikes. The opposition will complain. The Prime Minister will protest blandly that the new provisions apply to everyone ("Look, it says 'Harper' right there in Article 2"). And right away, the opposition will face an oddly familiar choice among three options, the third a little fresher than the others.

(a) vote against the government and force an election,

(b) humiliating climbdown, followed (in this instance) by a bad case of Spiky Bed Back,

(c) coalition government.

In short, late January will not be significantly different from late December. That's because these days Back-to-Parliament Day and Truly Weird Parliamentary Crisis Week are falling closer and closer together. Which is why, depending where you start counting, Canada's Parliament has not functioned as a legislative body since May, and is not likely to start working any time soon.

Everyone will blame somebody different for this state of affairs, but consider our increasingly erratic Prime Minister. In April and May he sent his MPs and his caucus's committee chairmen into a dozen committee rooms with written instructions for bringing the business of Parliament grinding to a halt. In July he urged Stéphane Dion to "fish or cut bait" in the matter of election timing. By late August he was furious to discover that Parliament was dysfunctional, in the manner of a man who pees on the floor and then complains the carpet is damp. He proceeded to cut Dion's bait by calling an election in defiance of the plain meaning of his own fixed election-date act. He campaigned on warnings that Dion would run a deficit, then delivered a victory speech full of fond wishes for peace and co-operation. Then he set about explaining why he'd probably have to run a deficit. Before long he was in Peru calling deficits "essential."

He returned to the hitherto dysfunctional Parliament and, barely a week after the Throne Speech, had his finance minister deliver an economic update in the form of a bed of nails: cuts in public funding for political parties, pre-emptive strikebreaking for public-sector unions that had been bargaining in good faith, the abandonment of wage equity. (No mention of deficits, though!) Two days later, when the opposition showed some teeth, Harper sent his transport minister—true story—to the CBC to announce the government would abandon the party-funding and union-busting provisions.



## Ottawa hasn't functioned effectively since May, and isn't likely to start working soon

Then he strode into Parliament and boldly built a consensus that saved us all from an eternal psychodrama. Just kidding! No, he went to Rideau Hall to strangle the fall session in its crib. If the opposition returns in January to announce it has backed off from its coalition gambit, it's only reasonable to assume Harper will send yet another minister—natural resources? Grains and oil seeds?—to a Petro-Can station or the Lambton Mall or somewhere to reintroduce the poison pill measures from the fall update. As Andrew Coyne has said, it's easy to keep your opponents guessing if your actions are determined by random chance.

But is it churlish of me to point out that in the meantime, Canada has no government worth the name?

The whole point of the fall election, we were told, was to give Harper some "open water" to govern without having to worry the opposition would do anything nasty, such as opposing him. The whole point. Certainty vs. chaos. Steady hand vs. the deluge. The voters granted him, for the second time, the awesome gift of power, he used it to steer a straight line away from open water into chaos and deluge, like some mad Ahab of parliamentary mischief.

In short, he's been a bit of a twit, has our dear leader. It does us no good to have a Prime Minister who flies to Winnipeg and Peru singing *Kumbaya* if he can't set foot in Parliament without bringing a blowtorch. He clearly cannot stand the place. That's a problem because at some point, he's going to need a functioning Parliament to get anything done.

Well, that's a problem if he actually wants to do something. Turns out that's a big "if." It's becoming more and more obvious that the impasse in the House of Commons is an expression of the Prime Minister's own conflicted feelings about the place. He showed on the Afghanistan war that when he wants to he can lead a government that bends and concedes in pursuit of its goals. But that was about soldiers. He cares about soldiers. He has never convinced me he cares about the economy, or believes any government can do anything to affect its course. Build roads? Bail out car companies? Take advice from Jack Layton? He'd sooner cut off the opposition's allowance, then hit the road to tell more fibs about Stéphane Dion.

From a springtime of committee chaos to a summer of ultimatums to a fall election, a December crisis, a tasty prorogue-y holiday feast, and the near certainty of another New Year psychodrama. I could swear there was a pattern in there. Blame the opposition if you like, but what olive branch did the PM hold out that they refused? Stephen Harper spent his whole adult life complaining that the state was no good for anything. Now, under him, it is so. Consistency at last.

**ON THE WEB.** For more Paul Wells, visit his blog at **macleans.ca/inklesswells**

# History's view of the Ottawa crisis—first-hand!



SCOTT FESCHUK

Only history knows how the developments and decisions of the past couple of weeks in Canadian politics will ultimately be regarded. So let's ask it.

*History, let me pose to you the question that's on the mind of many Canad—*

Hang on a jiff. I'm just putting the finishing touches on the rehabilitation of Karlheinz Schreiber's reputation.

*Wow. You're saying you will ultimately perceive the German businessman to have triumphed in his public conflict with Brian Mulroney?*

All I know is the guy slipped me a hundred grand. History's got to eat.

*How will future generations view Stephen Harper's decision to prorogue Parliament?*

Which one? That first bit of proroguing bought him time. But his more contentious move comes after he loses the vote in late January. That's when he decides to prorogue reality.

*He... huh?*

Desperate to retain his hold on power, Harper asks the Governor General to pause life as we know it and suspend the rules not only of Parliament but also of space, time and the entirety of the physical universe.

*But that's absurd. That's—*

She says yes. But to be fair, Harper isn't entirely dogmatic about it. True, stopping time means the popularity of most fads is frozen in place, forcing Canadians to endure nothing but dancing contests on television until 2031. But—and here is where we see Harper's strategic brilliance—it also allows people to immediately stop caring about both the environment and the Jonas Brothers.

*So.*

Yep. Majority.

*To what extent will Stephane Dion's legacy be dominated by his disastrous video address to the nation, which arrived late and out of focus?*

It was a truly humbling moment for a proud Canadian. Stéphane is so devastated he won't even be able to enjoy it when, several months from now, his videotape wins the Palme d'Or. The Cannes jury will call it "just the right amount of blurry."

*So the rumours are true—there really is no film too depressing to screen at the Cannes Film Festival.*



## This crisis will lead to two cat PMs and Canada's first all-nude constitutional crisis

Well, they did reject the indie movie *Liberal Fundraising Results 2008*. But I guess that in the end I've got no choice but to judge Dion pretty harshly. He led his party to its worst-ever percentage of the popular vote, botched his one shot at replacing Harper and somehow made fighting climate change unpopular. Not even Al Gore could do that. Plus—and this is just sad—Dion will spend most of 2009 trying to form an alliance to oust me as ultimate arbiter of all events. He's taking on history! As if anyone is ever going to accept his coalition of Paula Abdul, Farley Flex and Judge Judy.

*What effect will the current political intrigue have on Canada's ability to cope with the oncoming recession?*

I'm not saying that when times get tough, things get bad and people get truly desperate, but consider Harper's next re-election slogan and decide for yourself: Michael Ignatieff—Not a Leader, But Probably Delicious.

*You bring up Stephen Harper—what will come to be the legacy of his time on Parliament Hill?*

Other than the moat? I honestly don't know what to think of the guy yet. On one hand, he lacks the courtesy of a gentleman, the magnanimity of a statesman and the beating heart of a mammal. On the other hand, he's offered to put me in the Senate.

*That doesn't sound like much of an incentive.*

Three words: Hugh Segal backrubs.

*What about the overall effect of these past few weeks? How will it be viewed?*

It will come to be perceived as a turning point. For years, politicians wondered how to get Canadians to truly engage in politics, to care about what happens in Ottawa. And they've finally found a formula that works—naked power grabs and shameless displays of incompetence. This will ultimately lead to some more unprecedented developments in Canadian politics, including the separation of four provinces, the election of two cat prime ministers and the nation's first all-nude constitutional crisis.

*Really?*

Can you think of any other scenario that leads to the installation of Governor General Miss November?

*So fill us in—how does this all end?*

This bickering in Ottawa? Don't ask me. I'm just History. I'm not Eternity. M

**ON THE WEB.** To read Feschuk on the famous, visit his blog **macleans.ca/feschuk**

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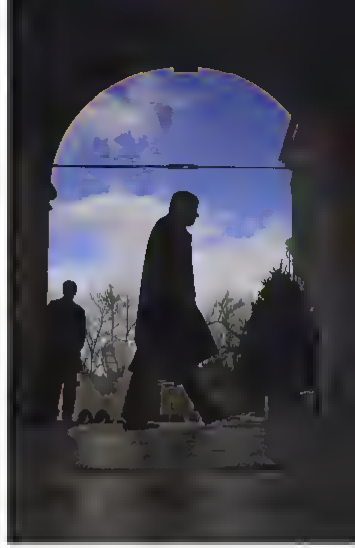

BARBARA AMIEL

BRINGING CONTEXT, INSIGHT AND CLARITY TO NEWS CLUTTER.

MACLEAN'S
MAKE SENSE OF IT ALL.



# INSIDE A CRISIS THAT SHOOK THE NATION



SHAUN BEST/REUTERS

**Secret meetings, shocking alliances, faulty strategies—and one wonky video camera**

A SPECIAL REPORT BY JOHN GEDDES AND AARON WHERRY

**Hushed conversations** about politics are nothing new at Toronto's venerable Albany Club. The downtown redoubt of old-style partisan skulduggery even boasts John A. Macdonald as a founding member, back in 1882. The conversations that matter, typically among well-heeled Conservatives at this oak-panelled incubator of Tory ambitions, usually stay confidential. Occasionally they turn very public, though, like the time Dalton Camp chose the club for a speech launching the revolt that ultimately deposed John Diefenbaker as party leader. The latest chapter in the club's lore came in the aftermath of the Oct. 14 federal election, and, for a change, there wasn't a Tory at the table.

A week after Stephen Harper's triumph, a post-election breakfast panel discussion was held in the club. It brought together two backroom veterans: Brian Topp, who had run Jack Layton's New Democrat campaign, and Senator David Smith, the organizer of many Liberal campaigns who had worked this time on Stephane Dion's wobbly run. What Smith didn't know was that Topp had served on secret NDP "scenario committees" during the past three federal campaigns that studied potential outcomes, including coalitions. After the most recent campaign, Layton assigned him to put out feelers to Liberals on the possibility of forming a coalition should Harper's government ever look vulnerable.

That morning, Topp and Smith lingered beneath the stained glass windows of the club's main dining room. They traded war stories, Smith's going back to Lester B. Pearson, Topp's from his days in Saskatchewan

# 'WE HAD HEARD THE COALITION TALK—WE THOUGHT IT WAS FANTASY'



DION STARTED OFF crushingly succinct, asking, 'Does the Prime Minister still believe he enjoys the confidence of this House?'

working for NDP premier Roy Romanow Topp broached the idea of co-operation Smith noted that the Liberals were presently preoccupied with their leadership race. But Topp was encouraged enough that he thought their conversation was worth picking up again after the new Liberal leader was chosen in a planned convention in Vancouver in early May.

And that was that, or so it seemed. Topp and Smith couldn't have guessed, of course, that only a month or so later Harper would undertake such a risky move against their parties that the coalition concept they touched on so tentatively would crystallize in just three days of bargaining in Ottawa hotels. They would be back in contact, as part of a flurry of behind-closed doors bargaining, all against a backdrop of parliamentary crisis. By trying to strip all federal parties of a public subsidy—an audacious frontal attack on his opponents—Harper drove the Liberals, NDP, and even the separatist Bloc Québécois into each others' arms.

The sudden emergence of a united opposition front, bent on defeating his minority at its first chance, led Harper to make a series of desperate counter-thrusts. He revived the moribund national unity debate by making the separatist Bloc's support for the coalition his main grounds for attacking it, even accusing Dion on the floor of the House of Commons of plotting to "destroy the country."

Harper then pushed the country to the brink of a full-blown constitutional crisis by asking Governor General Michaëlle Jean to suspend Parliament to prevent the coalition from feiling his minority this month. By granting the request, she set a precedent that seems to hand future prime ministers heading besieged minority governments a powerful new tool for delaying being voted down in the House. Finally, after a blur of ploys and stratagems inside the Liberal party, the crisis hastened Dion's exit, ended the race to succeed him, and assured Michael Ignatieff's ascension to the party's leadership.

It was a year's worth of political headlines packed into less than two weeks of behind-closed-doors deal-making, parliamentary histrionics, and high-stakes leadership jockeying—plus one lousy video and a timely fall of hailstones. Not since the demise of the Meech Lake accord in June 1990 has the nation's political playing board been given such a shake.

## HARPER'S GAMBLE

Apart from the Albany Club prelude, the saga began with rumours of nothing more worrisome than a government gambit to make parliamentary perks a focus of its fall economic update. All last month, Finance Minister Jim Flaherty was sending signals that he wasn't ready to announce significant new spending. The annual fall update usually serves as a report on the state of the economy, but sometimes gives governments a chance to push out new tax or spending measures before their next full budget, which typically comes in February.

Without a whole lot to say about steps to confront the world economic crisis, the Tories signalled that they would fill the vacuum with symbolic belt-tightening on Parliament Hill—freezing MPs' salaries, perhaps, and curtailing their expenses.

In hindsight, almost everybody missed what should have been a clear hint that something more dramatic was in store. It came when Harper sent out his communications director, Kory Teneycke, who more often speaks off the record, to do a series of TV interviews laying the groundwork for the update. "There will be much bleating from political parties, but it will hit the government disproportionately," Teneycke warned. "It will be deeper and broader than anyone expects." Yet nobody guessed that he meant that Flaherty was about to announce a proposal to yank away the $1.95 per vote subsidy the federal parties are paid every year, a taxpayer underwriting of party costs that amounts to less than $30 million.

That subsidy was introduced in 2004, part of Jean Chrétien's landmark reform of political financing. Chrétien eliminated corporate and union donations to parties, and limited personal contributions to $5,000 (Harper later cut the individual limit to $1,000). In return, the parties would gain taxpayer money, doled out in quarterly payments based on the number of votes they received in the last election. For the 12 months that ended last Sept. 30, the Conservatives collected about $10.5 million, the Liberals $8.75 million, the NDP $5 million, and the Bloc $3 million.

But the importance of that public money varies according to the parties' capacity to raise their own funds—and therein lay the problem for Harper's opponents. The Tories' mighty fundraising machine pulled in $19.7 million in the 12 months that ended Sept. 30, the Liberals a paltry $5.7 million. Considering they have a much smaller voter base than the Liberals, the NDP did better, also raising $5.7 million. The Bloc's backers contributed $361,000. So the Tories are the least reliant of any party on the taxpayer support, and what's more, Harper has never liked the concept. And he calculated that Canadians wouldn't like it much either—if they were prompted to think about it. That was a reasonable guess. But why would the government imagine that the opposition parties, who together control a solid majority of House seats, would go along with a brazen bid to cripple their operations?

A Conservative official told *Maclean's* that a key assumption was that the NDP would side with the Tories, seeing a chance to bankrupt their shared historic adversary—the Grits. Although NDP fundraising is not as robust as the Tories', it's markedly healthier than the Liberals'. "We thought," said the Tory insider, "the NDP would see that the Liberals would be hurt more than them."

The Prime Minister's Office also assumed that the Liberals, more than five months away from the convention where they would select a new leader, were in no position to bring down the government and force an election. As for banding together with the other opposition parties, Dion had ruled out a coalition with the NDP during the fall campaign, and as the bitter foe of separatists in his home province, few could imagine him coming to terms with the Bloc.

Left to sort out the situation themselves, the Liberals might never have pressed for a coalition. But they didn't have to act first. On the evening of Nov. 26, the night before the economic update, the government leaked news of the plan to strip away the parties' public subsidy, and the NDP quickly contacted Dion's office to open up lines of communication. Layton's schedule for the following morning was cleared.

By the morning of Thursday, Nov. 27, the unintended consequence of the Tory gambit was taking shape. Much of the action originated in Layton's office. He called Dion at around 10 a.m. Topp got back in touch with David Smith. Ed Broadbent, the former NDP leader, reached out to his closest counterpart in the Liberal firmament, Jean Chrétien. NDP strategists expected Chrétien to see the issue in terms of his own legacy. "After all," noted a senior New Democrat official, "he brought in public financing of parties in the first place."

Still, Flaherty's update, which he would deliver in the House at 4 p.m., might make it difficult, or even impossible, for the nascent coalition talks to proceed. Opposition officials expected Flaherty to unveil at least token economic stimulus proposals, spending ideas that might prove popular enough to make it hard for Liberals and New Democrats to reject the whole package. The opposition parties got their answer in a confidential briefing on the update—a "lock-up" in Ottawa parlance—organized for them by Flaherty's officials in Parliament's West Block.

As the NDP, Liberal, and Bloc advisers and MPs in the lock-up pored over the briefing papers, they found none of the sweeteners they had expected. Instead, along with the bombshell plan to remove party financing, they discovered two more incendiary proposals. Flaherty vowed to temporarily take away the right of public sector unions to strike, and remove the right of women claiming they were underpaid compared with men to take their pay-equity complaints to the Canadian Human Rights Commission. A senior NDP official said those provisions left no chance the party could vote for the update.

In the House of Commons, Flaherty, the man charged with delivering this package concocted largely in the Prime Minister's Office, stuck to the script. "We cannot ask Canadians to tighten their belts during tougher times without looking in the mirror," he lectured. "There will be no free ride for political parties. There never was. The freight was being paid by the taxpayer. This is the last stop on the route." He wrapped up by vowing he wouldn't be lured into any costly short-term stimulus scheme. "We will address our immediate, external challenges the same way we will reach our longer-term goals," Flaherty said, "by continuing to manage tax dollars wisely, investing strictly in the essentials and focusing on what ultimately matters, the longer-term prosperity of all Canadians."



FLAHERTY THOUGHT the fiscal update went reasonably well

A veteran of Mike Harris's ideologically charged Ontario Tory government, Flaherty arrived in Ottawa in 2006 with a reputation as a hard-liner, strict on spending, and fiercely partisan. But he quickly gained a reputation as one of the few reliably agreeable figures on Harper's front bench. Unlike, say, attack dogs like Transport Minister John Baird and defensive specialists like Public Safety Minister Peter Van Loan, Flaherty seemed to enjoy the give and take, sometimes even laughing at a good round of heckling. He met

PHOTOGRAPHS BY BLAIR GABLE

conflict with a stereotypically Irish smile

On Nov 27, Flaherty apparently figured he'd put in a pretty fair day. He finished up a series of media interviews on his update before 7 p.m., early enough to drop in at Hy's, a steak house and martini bar a short walk off the Hill, for a celebratory drink, just as he had after each of three budgets he'd delivered so far for Harper. "We had heard the coalition talk," a Tory official recalls of the mood that evening, "and thought it was fantasy."

But while Flaherty was following his post-game rituals, the scene he had left behind on Parliament Hill was anything but routine. Typically the opposition parties' finance critics respond to an economic update speech. Dion did not yet see the need to speak for the party, so his finance critic, Scott Brison, responded for the Liberals. Layton, however, decided on the fly to take up half the time allotted to his finance critic, star Montreal MP Thomas Mulcair. And Gilles Duceppe would respond for his Bloc Québecois.

Brison offered a conventional attack on Flaherty, concentrating on economic issues. Duceppe raised the stakes, accusing Harper of "putting his own extreme partisanship before democracy." Invoking a sovereigntist icon, he remembered that René Lévesque had introduced public financing of parties in Quebec. Layton upped the ante further. "We are standing," he said with an air of man who knew more than he was telling, "at a historic moment in this chamber."

## SECRET MEETINGS, UNHOLY ALLIANCES

Even before Layton had begun to speak, he had summoned Topp, whose job outside politics is as executive director of the Toronto-based ACTRA union of arts and media workers, to Ottawa. That evening, Layton spoke by phone with both Dion and Duceppe. All sides were serious about pushing ahead. Topp arrived in Ottawa late that evening ready to spearhead negotiations.

On Friday morning, the Liberal caucus met, and MPs emerged determined not to allow party financing to become the main point of debate. Fearful that Canadians would see them as self-serving, they agreed to highlight Flaherty's failure to offer stimulative spending. MP Ken Dryden urged a cluster of reporters not to be "fooled" or "distracted" by the party subsidy issue. The Conservatives, however, were working flat out to make opposition greed the defining theme. Speaking to a business crowd of about 300 at a lunch speech to the Economic Club of Toronto, Flaherty vowed to press ahead with ending taxpayer payments to parties. As for economic action, he remained flinty. "I would hope the economy would be strong," he said, "and we won't need to have any additional stimulus into the Canadian economy."




'WE ARE STANDING at a historic moment,' Layton said, foreshadowing events to come

Back in Ottawa, though, the Tory brain trust was figuring out that the coalition was for real. Word that Chretien and Broadbent were involved leaked out. The opposition parties could realistically hope to defeat Harper's minority, and the Governor General might well decide not to grant him another election so soon after the Oct. 14 vote. Instead, she might ask Dion to try form ing a coalition government.

Harper needed time. At a hastily arranged news conference in the House foyer, he called off Monday's scheduled "opposition day," which would have given the Liberals a chance to table a non-confidence motion. He can celled the so-called ways-and-means motion, a routine follow-up to the economic update also scheduled for Monday, which would have given the opposition a second chance to defeat him. "While we have been working on the economy," he said, "the opposition is working on a backroom deal to reverse the results of the election."

Indeed, the crucial first round of backroom dealing was being conducted in secret at three hotels, each a short walk in a different direc tions from where Harper spoke. Just east of Parliament Hill, at the iconic Chateau Lau rier hotel, the Liberals and Bloc were meet ing to see if a deal was possible. Dion sent Johanne Senecal, his chief of staff, and Mont real MP Marlene Jennings, while the Bloc emissaries were Francois Leblanc, a senior aide to Duceppe, and prominent MP Pierre Paquette. Just west of the Hill, at the Marri ott, the NDP and Bloc held parallel talks. These discussions had established a crucial starting point: the Bloc was not asking for full partnership in the coalition. In particular, Duceppe wasn't demanding seats at the cab inet table, or insisting on explicit concessions to his sovereigntist agenda.

That cleared the way for the key bargain ing to take place between the Liberals and New Democrats. They were meeting at the Sheraton, just south of the Hill. The Liberals sent Herb Metcalfe, a veteran Ottawa con sultant and close adviser to Dion, and former finance minister Ralph Goodale. The NDP dispatched Topp and B.C. MP Dawn Black. Sources in both parties say those Friday after noon talks went remarkably smoothly.

That evening, Topp called his old boss, Roy Romanow, for advice. The two had worked together in Saskatchewan to pull together a NDP coalition with the Liberals in 1989, an arrangement that lasted for four years. In fact, the NDP's experience with provincial coalitions, combined with its slim chances of ever winning a federal election outright, had left the party's insiders surprisingly well versed in the concept of coalition rule.

A senior NDP official told *Maclean's* that in each of the 2004, 2006 and 2008 cam paigns, Layton set up a "scenarios commit tee," which studied possible election out comes—including the chance of forming a coalition. In the last two elections the com mittee was co-chaired by Topp and party president Anne McGrath, and included Broad bent and former Saskatchewan premier Allan Blakeney. Among the cases they studied were the Romanow-led Saskatchewan coalition, and David Peterson's 1985 Ontario Liberal government, which was kept in power through an accord with the Bob Rae-led provincial NDP. "A bunch of other coalition and accord arrangements were studied," said an NDP offical. "The New Zealand arrangements were quite interesting and we looked at some of the European ones."

Now, Topp, McGrath, Blakeney and Broad bent, who had spent long hours studying the mechanics of hypothetical coalitions, includ ing scenarios in which they partnered the Liberals, were all gathered in Ottawa work ing on the real thing.

On Saturday they were back at the Shera ton, this time on the 17th floor. The Liber als sent Metcalfe, Senecal, Jennings, and Katie Telford, Dion's deputy chief of staff. They were up to speed, bringing ideas drawn from New Zealand's recent history of dur able coalitions. Most of the key points were quickly worked out, using a laptop and a projector so all negotiators could follow the evolution of a text. A key stumbling block: how many seats each party would get in a coalition cabinet?

While the negotiations progressed in secret, Ottawa's political and media circles were aflame with rumours. By now, Conservatives were clearly running scared. In an unprece dented move for the combative Harper, he dispatched Baird to tell the media the Tories would drop the legislation to strip the parties of public financing. "We just don't think it's worth getting into an election on that issue," Baird said.

But by now the opposition parties weren't thinking of forcing an election—they were preparing a coalition ready to step directly into power. "The political financing changes were never the issue," Goodale fired back. "The economy has always been the issue." Baird staked a claim to the democratic high ground. "This is all about trying to overturn the results of the last election campaign."

A tone of stunned disbelief crept into Tory comments, both public and private. In its hunt for information, the Prime Minister's Office even reached out to diehard Liberals. The extent of Tory efforts to get informed, by any means available, would become clear the following day.

Flaherty was back on the hot seat on Sun day. He started the day with a TV interview in which he offered a newly conciliatory tone. Reacting to Liberal, NDP and Bloc taunts about the lack of any real economic plan in his update, he announced that his budget would be tabled on Jan. 27, earlier than ever before. Conservatives also backed away from banning public sector strikes, a retreat that looked designed to soften NDP determina tion to defeat them.

That afternoon, Flaherty sounded deflated in a hastily arranged conference call with reporters. After the about-faces on political financing and strikes by government work ers, he now wearily added a strong hint that he would bend on fundamental economic policy. Long skeptical about an auto industry bailout, he now sounded resigned to having to deliver one. "We're going to have to deal with the automotive issue," he conceded. "Obviously."

But if Flaherty sounded beaten down, the PMO displayed a bit of its customary no-holds-barred style. That same Sunday, Harper's press secretary, Dimitri Soudas, distributed a recording of an NDP caucus conference call from the day before. It seemed that in circu lating instructions for getting on the call, the NDP mistakenly emailed Tory Vancouver Island MP John Duncan, instead of their own Edmonton MP Linda Duncan. The Conserva tives took the chance to covertly listen in.



DUCEPPE favours the coalition's jobs policy

They then pounced on an allusion by Layton to "moves" the NDP made "a long time ago" to open up the possibility of co-operating with the Bloc. The Tories accused their rivals of planning to cozy up to the separatists long before the economic update. Outraged NDPers applied a new adjective to the Prime Minis ter's methods. "Nixonian."

As the eavesdropping affair raged, long strides were being made toward a final coali tion pact. On Sunday morning, Topp and Metcalfe met at the restaurant of the Marri ott for breakfast and a crucial discussion about cabinet. They agreed that to show restraint it should have only 24 members, plus the prime minister, down from Harper's 38. Met calfe started off suggesting five NDP port folios, Topp asked for seven. An hour and a half later, they settled on six. A key point was that the NDP offered to let the finance min ister be a Liberal. "The candidates for that office on the Liberal side are well known," said an senior NDP official, "and we can work fine with whoever they ultimately pick."

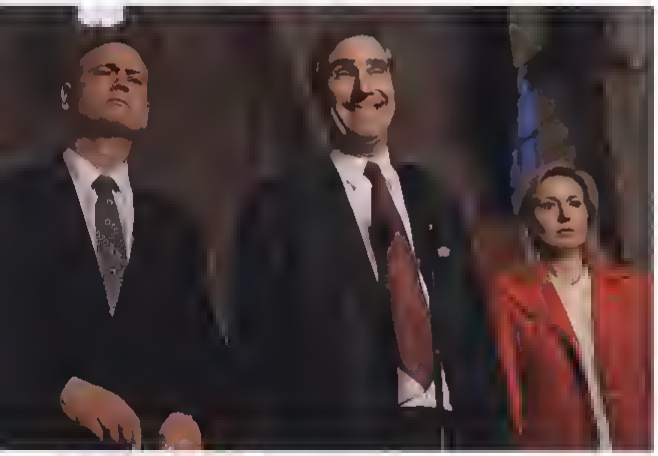
With cabinet quotas worked out by 10:30 a.m., the afternoon negotiations turned to the coalition's core economic policies. Return ing to the second floor of the Sheraton, the NDP and Liberals each brought teams of five. The NDP tabled their proposals, then left the Liberals for a couple of hours to work out their reaction. Then the two groups hashed

PHOTOGRAPHS BY BLAIR GABLE

over details together, with Goodale and Blakeney—two old Saskatchewan politicians who have known each other for decades—often taking the lead. By the time the NDP and Liberals had a deal, the darkness of an early winter's evening had settled on Ottawa.

The Bloc wasn't invited in until about 6 p.m. Duceppe's negotiators agreed to support the coalition for 18 months, long enough to pass a Throne Speech and two budgets, even though the Liberals and NDP hoped to make their joint government last for 30 months. Duceppe said later that the Bloc signed on partly because it broadly favours the coalition's policies to boost support to some industries, including forestry, and introduce new social spending, like help for older workers who lose their jobs.

Nailing down exactly which House votes the Bloc would be committed to supporting the coalition on was more difficult. The Bloc proposed complex terms, then left to let the NDP and Liberals simplify the wording. They looked at the 1985 Ontario accord between Peterson and Rae as a guide, but had to draft new clauses to take into account federal par



LIBERAL INSIDERS said Ignatieff is deeply suspicious of the coalition arrangement

liamentary rules. The final text wasn't finished until about a half hour after midnight.

Even as the coalition was being born, debate raged inside the Liberal party about who should lead it. That evening, in Toronto's Yorkville district, the party's leadership contenders met for dinner at front-runner Michael Ignatieff's condominium. A veteran Liberal strategist told *Maclean's* that earlier in the day, Bob Rae and Dominic LeBlanc both seemed open to dropping out in favour of Ignatieff. Talks among the leadership camps were fuelled by a growing sentiment that Dion—a lame-duck leader who had sunk the party to its lowest popular vote share ever in the recent election—couldn't be allowed to serve as prime minister of the coalition government until he handed off to a new Liberal leader in May. But by dinnertime, Rae had decided to stay in the leadership hunt. So the three decided only to make a united show of support for the coalition in Ottawa the following day.

## THE 'REAL' HARPER RETURNS

By Monday, Dec. 1, the sense of impending crisis had spread beyond the parliamentary precinct. Both the Conservatives and the Liberals launched fundraising drives, stoking an atmosphere bordering on panic. A Tory plea asked for money so the party could "wage the fight of its life" against "socialists and separatists." A Liberal canvassing email touted the party's aim of putting "partisan politics aside and working with the other parties to form an alternative government to protect Canadian jobs."

Some Tories admitted later that they were deeply demoralized that morning. Ever since he created the new Conservative party in 2003, by orchestrating the unification of the Canadian Alliance and the old Progressive Conservatives, Harper had been revered by his troops as a strategic mastermind. Now, with his provocative economic update in tatters, its main tenets abandoned, his aura of invincibility was gone. "By then it was sinking in that this coalition was a serious thing," said one Tory operative, "and people were a little down."

By 2:15 p.m., the appointed hour for question period, a nearly giddy mood had spread among opposition MPs. Harper entered the House, and his caucus stood to applaud as he walked to his front-bench seat—their salute mockingly joined by several Liberals. Not always a sharp House performer, Dion started off crushingly succinct. "Does the Prime Minister," he asked, "still believe that he enjoys the confidence of this House?"

Harper usually hits back hard when he is pressed, but this day he sounded merely peevish. In one exchange he accused Dion of being "about to play the biggest political game in Canadian history"—almost complimentary coming from as bold a player as Harper. Overall, he was uncharacteristically passive. When Environment Minister Jim Prentice, sometimes touted as a potential successor to Harper, stood to take a question late in the session, the Liberals let loose with cries of "Leader! Leader!"

Yet this question period included one unsettling moment for the Liberals, too. After Bloc and NDP MPs stood with the Liberals to applaud Dion's lead-off question, Liberals appeared confused about what to do when Duceppe's turn came. When he rose, his own caucus gave him the expected standing ovation, as did NDP MPs. Liberals hesitated. Some got up, some didn't. Some looked around nervously. Cheering the Bloc? These were strange days. And shrewder Tories took note.

The next critical act in the unfolding drama took place in the Railway Committee Room. It opens off the Hall of Honour that bisects the Centre Block of Parliament, running between the Peace Tower and the Library of Parliament. Its name derives from the old standing committee on railways, canals and telegraph lines, a powerful force in Ottawa from 1867 to 1965. The coalition partners announced they would hold a ceremonial signing of their pact there at 4:30 p.m., followed by a news conference.

As MPs, political staffers and reporters assembled, the optics of the event about to happen became clear. Under the gaze of the Fathers of Confederation, in the famous group portrait that hangs at the room's south end, a signing table with chairs for three, and another with three microphones for the news conference, were being set up. Asked about how it was going to look to have Duceppe, the separatist, looking like an equal partner in the deal, a Liberal MP shrugged off the concern. Hadn't the Bloc settled in as an accepted part of the federal scene since it rose out of the ashes of Meech Lake in 1990?

Few would have believed that Dion, who came to Ottawa to fight for federalism after the near miss of the 1995 referendum, would ever publicly sign a pact with Duceppe. But Dion cast the creation of the coalition as a matter of necessity, "given the critical situation facing our fellow citizens and the refusal and inability of the Harper government to deal with this crisis." Layton theatrically addressed Harper directly through the TV cameras. "Prime Minister, your government has lost the confidence of the House and it is going to be defeated at the earliest opportunity," he said. "I urge you to accept this gracefully." The interstellar depth of the cold in Harper's eyes, as he watched Layton say these words, can only be imagined.

The coalition agreement didn't offer many openings for attacks on policy. The Liberal carbon tax proposal from the fall campaign was gone. So was the NDP vow to reverse the Tories' corporate tax cuts. The Bloc won no concessions that could be construed as enhancing Quebec's status. But Duceppe's simple presence at the signing was enough to cheer up Tories. "As soon as we saw how it looked," said one Conservative operative, "that put some wind in our sails."

But attacking the coalition as a "deal with the devil," as Flaherty called it, wouldn't keep the Tories in power. Their only obvious opportunity to win time was to ask the Governor General to prorogue Parliament, essentially suspending its sitting, rather than facing certain defeat on a confidence vote. "The government will consider all steps that are reasonable to protect the interests of our country," said Prentice when asked about the prorogation option. Revenue Minister Jean-Pierre Blackburn was blunter about the prospect of the coalition asking Michaëlle Jean for a chance to govern: "It's a kind of coup d'etat."

Calling the coalition an illegitimate deal with the separatists, however, raised a problematic bit of recent Tory history. It turned out that Harper had seriously discussed a possible coalition with the NDP and Bloc back in 2004, when Paul Martin's Liberal minority was in office.

Still, by Tuesday the Tories were pounding relentlessly against what they were now calling "the separatist coalition." By question period, Harper was a changed man from the listless performer of a day before. Yelling and jabbing his finger in the air, he damned the Liberals for communing with separatists. He even threw the sainted Liberal names of Wilfrid Laurier and Pierre Trudeau in Dion's face. And, responding to a question from Layton, he claimed that the troika of coalition leaders had refused to appear with the "Canadian flag behind them" at their Monday signing ceremony.

That was untrue, as many photographs proved, and Dion was enraged. Although he normally only poses the first three questions in QP, the Liberal leader jumped back up after Harper's accusation. "I love this country and I have dedicated my life to Canadian unity," he shouted. Harper, refusing to ease off, shot back. "If the leader of the Liberal party believes in the country, he will walk away from this document and admit it is the worse mistake the Liberal party has ever made in its history."

Government and opposition MPs traded insults. Treasury Board President Vic Toews singled out members of the Liberal front bench and loudly called them "traitors." The cacophony was almost frightening.

After QP, MPs leave the House through their lobbies, narrow rooms that stretch the length of the Commons chamber of either side. They are usually crowded with political staff and MPs who have drifted out of their seats. When Harper walked into the government lobby on Dec. 2, the Tories first cheered, then chanted his name, and finally burst into a raucous rendition of *O Canada*. The real Harper, who had slipped away from them for a day, was back. Speaking to reporters afterwards, Indian Affairs Minister Chuck Strahl said it was "a fine day to be a parliamentarian."



# HARPER IS 'AFRAID TO SHOW UP FOR WORK,' SAID RAE

RAE'S BOWING OUT of the Liberal leadership race capped a two-week swirl that even the most astute observers couldn't have foreseen

PHOTOGRAPHS BY BLAIR GABLE

## OUT OF FOCUS

By the following afternoon the opposition, which had been so sure Harper's days were numbered, looked far less sure-footed. Con




REPORTERS identified Tory staffers in the demonstrations; the fuzzy video (below)

fflicts were creeping into the Liberal and NDP communications strategy regarding their deal with the Bloc. Liberals stressed that the Bloc was merely *supporting* a coalition of the Liberals and New Democrats, so it was wrong to call Duceppe a coalition partner. Yet NDP strategists had taken to countering the Tory slur "separatist coalition" with the phrase "majority coalition." And to claim a House majority for the coalition, they had to count the Bloc's 49 MPs in with the Liberals' 77 and the NDP's 37, which made it sound a lot like they *were* coalition partners. (The Tories hold 143 seats.)

Fearful that Harper would move soon to ask Jean to suspend the House, opposition MPs began circulating petition letters declaring to her that they had lost confidence in the Tory government. Ignatieff's signature showed up as the very last one on the Liberal letter, which many took as confirmation of reports that he was at best lukewarm about the coalition.

If he or any other Liberals feared the whole thing might fall apart, their worries only deepened on Wednesday evening. Harper asked for time on the main TV networks to address the nation on the parliamentary crisis. He was widely expected to declare that he would request prorogation from the Governor General, and explain his reasoning. Instead, he merely summed up his allegations against the coalition, repeatedly slamming its "separatist" link, although he used the softer "*souverainiste*" in the French version.

Harper's performance was solid. Yet his failure to frankly explain why he should be allowed to postpone facing a confidence vote in the House—the bedrock source of a government's democratic legitimacy in the British parliamentary system—seemed evasive. News that he planned to visit Jean the next morning was delivered by officials rather than from the Prime Minister's own mouth. But Harper would not have to face much criticism. Dion's video rebuttal saw to that.

The Liberal leader had promised to deliver taped messages in French and English to the networks by 6:30 p.m. By the time his tape was dropped off, more than 30 minutes late, CTV's main network had returned to regular programming. It would have been far better for the Liberals if all the networks had lost their patience.

On the tape, Dion's face loomed up out-of-focus and strangely framed. Observers variously speculated on whether the Liberals shot it with a cellphone camera or the webcam on Dion's laptop. Liberals familiar with the fiasco said Dion and his staff agonized so long over his text that their video technicians had little time to set up a proper shot and no time to fix mistakes. It might have been nothing more than a technical botch-up, but the debacle reinforced Dion's image as a bungler. It prompted some Liberals to recall how Dion's speech at the Montreal convention where he won the party leadership ran over the allowed time, and organizers cut off his microphone. Versions of what went wrong this time vary, but blame fell squarely on Dion. "He permits and *insists* on unwieldy processes," said one exasperated Liberal organizer.



## PARLIAMENT UNPLUGGED

The next morning, the Prime Minister arrived promptly at 9:30 a.m. for his historic meeting with the Governor General. Stepping out of his car, he waved to reporters, assembled 70 metres away, before entering Rideau Hall through a side door. Down the driveway, at the entrance to the estate, a cluster of demonstrators gathered to show their support for Harper, waved handmade placards. It looked spontaneous enough, but reporters identified several paid Tory staffers in the group.

The meeting lasted 2½ hours. Harper and Jean talked with only two other officials present: Kevin Lynch, the country's top bureaucrat as clerk of the Privy Council, and Jean's closest aide, Sheila Marie Cook, whose title is secretary to the Governor General and herald chancellor. The *Globe and Mail* reported that Jean left the room once to confer with constitutional lawyer Peter Hogg. *Maclean's* has learned the Hogg, author of the definitive *Constitutional Law of Canada* and professor emeritus of York University's Osgoode Hall Law School, was called in by Rideau Hall to serve as Jean's adviser several days earlier, as soon as the first speculation began swirling that Harper would try to avoid facing a confidence vote.

Hogg's expertise, and Jean's poise under pressure, would be severely tested. The situation was unprecedented. The closest thing to it was the so-called King-Byng Affair of 1926, when governor general Lord Byng refused prime minister William Lyon Mackenzie King's request to dissolve Parliament for an election when his own minority, which had relied on support from the Progressives, couldn't govern on. Byng instead allowed Conservative leader Arthur Meighen a chance to form a government. It was short-lived, and King won the ensuing election. According to University of Toronto law professor Ed Morgan, the lesson of the King-Byng Affair is mixed: Byng was right to give Meighen his chance, but King's subsequent election win proved voters didn't appreciate having a government foisted on them by an appointed governor general's decision.

Jean chose not to be another Byng: she granted Harper's request. Parliament would be shut down until Jan. 26, the day before the Conservatives promised to table their budget. Harper emerged, walking down the steps of Rideau Hall in a long, black coat and maroon scarf. It had begun to snow just before he arrived at the podium. As he spoke, the flakes gave way to pellets of hail, which bounced off his shoulders and collected in his hair. Gusts of wind rumbled over his microphone. "Obviously," he said, "we have to do some trust-building here on both sides." The previous day he had accused Dion of planning "to destroy this country."

Dion responded by saying only a "monumental change" in Tory economic policy would stop the coalition from felling the government in late January. "Warm sentiments are not enough," Dion said of Harper. "His behaviour must change." Did this mean Liberals were no longer bent on voting down the Tories as soon as possible? NDP Leader Jack Layton darkly predicted Harper would unleash "seven weeks of propaganda" to try to build enough public support to survive. Even after Harper pledged to work with his opponents, Heritage Minister James Moore told *Maclean's* the Tories had no intention of scaling back their barrage of rallies, radio call-in show blitzes, and Internet agitation. "It allows a lot of Canadians who are frustrated to express themselves," he said.

After Jean gave Harper his prorogation, Liberals held a tense caucus meeting on Parliament Hill. Reports filtered out that Rae spoke as the main champion of the coalition, while Ignatieff silenced the assembled MPs and senators by grimly warning them that the party is in no condition to risk forcing an election early in 2009. What if the opposition parties vote down the Tories in late January, but Jean passes over their coalition in favour of an election? Rae was more uplifting, said one MP, but Ignatieff had a point.

After the caucus meeting, Liberal MP Jim Karygiannis hammered Dion. "Unfortunately, Mr. Dion didn't do so good in the last election. We bombed," Karygiannis said. "And he didn't do so good last night. And we bombed again." Rae saved his attack for Harper, labelling him "a man who is afraid to show up for work." Ignatieff, Dion's most likely successor, wouldn't be lured into any criticism of the leader. "The questions of leadership," he said, "are not of the hour."

The hour arrived the very next day. In a Friday television interview, Ignatieff admitted what Liberal MPs had been saying privately since Dion's Wednesday video embarrassment. "What the party is discussing," he said, "is whether there are ways in which the leadership race can be accelerated in such a way that we can present clear alternatives to the country." The next morning's *Globe and Mail* carried a stinging guest column by John Manley calling for Dion's early exit. "His weakness probably fuelled the Conservative hubris that led to this fiasco in the first place," the former Liberal deputy prime minister wrote.

Tories staged 21 rallies across Canada against the coalition that day. "We have a right to protest," said Moore. "And the reality is that what Stéphane Dion did this past week has angered a lot of Canadians." A spate of polls showed the Tories getting a solid bounce out of the crisis, and scant public appetite for the coalition. A Harris-Decima poll this week found that nearly 70 per cent wanted Harp

PHOTOGRAPHS BY BLAIR GABLE

HARPER HAD BEEN REVERED by his troops as a strategic mastermind. Suddenly, his aura of invincibility was gone.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY BLAIR GABLE

# CLEARLY 'TRUST-BUILDING' IS NEEDED, HARPER SAID

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A SPATE OF POLLS show the Tories getting a solid bounce out of the crisis

PHOTOGRAPH BY BLAIR GABLE/REUTERS

er's Conservatives to stay in power, nearly double the 37.7 per cent of the popular vote the Tories won in the Oct. 14 election.

## SORTING THROUGH THE WRECKAGE

Back at work in Ottawa on Monday, even with the House silenced, Liberals braced for what would be a head-spinning day of leadership developments. After a weekend of intense pressure, Dion announced by email that he would resign whenever the party chose a new leader. Dominic LeBlanc quit to clear the way for Ignatieff to immediately succeed Dion. "The Liberal party owes itself and the Canadian people a new leader, a permanent leader, a leader able to make the necessary decisions and needed judgments leading to the budget vote and beyond," said LeBlanc.

That left Bob Rae, one of Ignatieff's oldest friends, as his last standing rival. Rae agreed on Sunday that the party shouldn't wait until May to choose a leader, but he insisted the party members should be allowed to vote before, perhaps through some sort of Internet balloting. It was Rae's last chance. Ignatieff dominated among the party's elite, making Rae's only hope an appeal to the rank-and-file. The party executive rejected his pleas for a wide-open vote, announcing on Tuesday this week that only MPs, senators, defeated candidates and party officials would be consulted.

Rae gave up a few hours later, gracefully offering Ignatieff his full support. His bowing out capped a two-week swirl that even the most seasoned political veterans couldn't have foreseen. What comes next is no more obvious. The coalition forged in those hotel rooms might yet resist centrifugal forces, and cling together long enough to defeat Harper at the end of January. But Liberal sources said Ignatieff is deeply suspicious of the arrangement. Even if he sticks tentatively with the coalition, Harper might craft a budget by late next month that's too appealing to vote down.

Whatever the outcome, the parties and their leaders all look different now. Harper survived into 2009 only through improvisation, occasional demagoguery, and constitutional brinksmanship. His reputation for strategic savvy is permanently damaged, as might be his party's prospects among Quebecers who don't view the Bloc as fair game for demonization. He still has only a minority, and now faces opposition leaders who distrust and dislike him, and long to humble him, more than ever. His advantage in facing Dion, a lame duck, is suddenly lost. Ignatieff might be tougher.

Layton's long-standing behind-the-scenes interest in coalitions and co-operation with other parties is now out in the open. That will make it hard for him to claim in any future campaign, as he did in the last one, that he's really "running for prime minister." The distinction between New Democrat and Liberal arms is clouded, perhaps diluting the NDP brand.

As for Ignatieff, he now takes over the Liberal helm, not after a bracing victory in a conventional leadership race, but through a rushed process that didn't allow normal democratic input from his party's members. He will have to struggle to validate his claim on the party's heart.

If much is left to be sorted out about what just transpired, it's clear that there was no winner. Any political advantage flowing from the crisis of late November 2008 will be measured only in terms of who manages to recover fastest. M

# A POLITICAL FIASCO OF THEIR OWN MAKING

### This is a new low for Canada, and Harper's Tories aren't to blame



ANDREW COYNE

Something in the Canadian political class, some primeval instinct, requires it to beach itself at regular intervals on the shores of some lunatic misadventure. The ingredients are always the same: immense self-absorption, total strategic blindness, a profound disconnect with, if not contempt for, how its machinations will play outside its own narrow circles; and, as the extent of its miscalculation starts to become clear, panicked, bovine unanimity in support of pressing on with the same strategy. Oh, and some sort of special status for Quebec.

Until now, the Meech Lake and Charlottetown cataclysms were the foremost examples of this seemingly bottomless appetite for self-destruction, this unwavering determination to learn nothing from past mistakes, except how to repeat them over and over again—especially where Quebec is concerned. But nothing in the long catalogue of elite folly quite matches the apparent fit of mass delusion that overcame the opposition parties last week. Never was there a more inept lunge for power, nor one with so little chances of success. As with any failed coup attempt, the long-term consequences are likely to be profound, and dreadful.

I know, I know: we are taught to believe the fault lies with Stephen Harper and the Conservatives. It was their miscalculation that kicked off the whole mess, in the official version—a fall economic statement that so enraged the opposition as to all but guarantee the government's demise. At best, the media consensus ran, the proposal to reduce public funding for political parties was a reckless provocation, an existential threat to the opposition parties that Harper should have known did, in the days when corporations could and did donate unlimited amounts to stay on side with the "natural governing party." The average Conservative contributor, by contrast, gives just $158. It's just that there are more of them: five times as many, last year, as the Liberals. There's nothing "unfair" in this, any more than it is unfair that a party should win an election because it got more votes. Is it so barbaric to suggest that political parties should rely less on the state, more on voluntary donations? Tell it to Sweden, where all party funding is private.

But leave aside the merits of the case: were the Tories motivated by crass partisanship? Of course. Did they misjudge the opposition



THE COALITION had politically savvier options than escalating to nuclear on day one

could only invite one response. The Prime Minister had opted for petty partisanship at a time when the public wanted action on the economy. To his worst critics, it was an attack on democracy, a pathologically partisan attempt to starve the opposition parties of funds, in defiance of civilized democratic norms.

We can dispense with the last point first. While it is true that the opposition parties are more dependent on public funding than the Conservatives, that is only a statement of their relative lack of success in raising funds on their own. Yet absolutely nothing prevents them from doing so. The Tories enjoy no built-in structural advantage—as the Liberals

response? Undoubtedly: the rapid withdrawal of the offending provisions in the days after makes that clear. But did they *cause* this response? That's less clear. We have it from Jack Layton's own mouth—the famous eavesdropped conference call—that the NDP and the Bloc, in particular, were determined to bring the government down, and had prepared plans for a coalition government far in advance. But it is probably true that the economic statement, and the widespread perception that the Conservatives had crossed some sort of line, furnished them with the needed pretext. If Harper did not foresee that, it is perhaps to his discredit. But he may not have

imagined anyone could be quite so insane.

The opposition had other options, after all, between abject surrender, on the one hand, and taking the government down, on the other. They had won the initial skirmish over the economic statement: the preponderant media reaction was that the Tories were behaving like bullies. They could have exploited this. They could have moved amendments, proposed compromises, showing statesmanlike reasonableness in the face of Tory intransigence. When these failed, they could have tied up parliamentary business, filibustered, rang bells, all the roster of means an opposition has to register its displeasure. By dragging the debate out, they could have kept the issue in the public eye, allowing the impression of an overbearing and uncooperative government to sink in. They did not have to escalate to nuclear on the first day.

Even then, they had options. Having forced the government to climb down, in quite humiliating fashion, they could have backed off themselves. They would have proved their point, demonstrated resolve, shown unity. The government, and more particularly the Prime Minister, would have been left weakened. But they didn't. Whether out of maddened ambition, or a desire for revenge, or sheer bloodlust, they pressed on. Almost immediately, media attention turned from Harper's hubris to the coalition's unseemly lust for power. And worse was to come. If Harper was guilty of overreaching, the opposition redoubled his error in the other direction. If Harper misjudged the opposition's reaction, it is clear they misjudged his—and the public's.

Could they have *imagined* the plot would succeed? Could they really have supposed the public would meekly accept the replacement of a duly elected government, just six weeks after its election, with a coalition of the parties it defeated—two of whom had explicitly campaigned against the idea? A coalition led by the Liberals, fresh from their worst election showing since Confederation—a party that, with just one quarter of the seats in Parliament, would not even be a majority within its own coalition? Backed by the NDP? And beholden for its very existence to the support of a separatist party? In what parallel universe would the public have swallowed any of this—to say nothing of Prime Minister Stephane Dion? Did anyone think to ask how this would play in, say, the West? Did anyone care?

There's no doubt of the legality of what was proposed. As coalition advocates patiently explained, ours is a system of parliamentary government. We elect parliaments, not governments, the ministry is composed of those who have the confidence of the 308 members of the House of Commons. In the wake of the Conservative defeat, the Governor General would have been perfectly within her rights, rather than plunge the country into yet another election, to call upon the coalition to form a government. And there was precedent, of a kind, notably Lord Byng's decision to call upon Arthur Meighen's Conservatives in 1926, rather than dissolve the House as Mackenzie King demanded. Apparently, the opposition persuaded themselves these sorts of arguments would impress the public.

It may be, as the historian Michael Bliss argues, that public expectations have changed, that we are no longer inclined to defer to our betters on such questions, but rather insist on deciding them ourselves. Or it may be that the present coalition was the problem: that changing governments without an intervening election might be acceptable in other circumstances, but could not be stretched to cover such an absurd set of facts. Whatever may be the case, the public's revulsion at what was proposed was palpable, and overwhelming. Polls showed majorities of upwards of 60 per cent opposed to the coalition taking power. Could no one have predicted this? Did no one recall what the result was in 1926—a resounding defeat for the Conservatives at the next election?

It's easy to see why the NDP was pushing for it. Had the coalition succeeded, they would have been given seats at the cabinet table, a half-dozen of them, for the first time in their history. No longer could they be marginalized as a protest party, without experience in government. Likewise, the Bloc's interest was clear. Whatever Gilles Duceppe might have agreed to include in the text of their infamous "accord," to the effect that the Bloc would not vote against the coalition government on a confidence motion for 18 months, the reality is that a Dion government would be entirely at the mercy of the Bloc for its survival. The "permanent consultative mechanism" envisaged in the accord would either deliver on the Bloc's demands—effectively conferring veto power, on the Bloc if not Quebec—or would be denounced as a sham, a fraud upon the Quebec "nation."

What is harder to fathom is why the Liberals would ever have signed on to this. At a stroke, Dion legitimized the NDP, even as he was marginalizing his own party, by association. Worse, by entering into a formal agreement with the Bloc, he threw away the Liberals' most enduring political strength, their reputation as the party of national unity. It wasn't that anyone feared that Dion, the passionate separatist-fighter, would conspire in the breakup of the country. But such an unpopular leader, at the head of such a weak party, would be peculiarly vulnerable to the demands of his coalition partners, NDP or Bloc. Indeed, one can only imagine that is how the whole thing got started: the NDP and the Bloc threatened to take down the government, and forced the Liberals to agree to a coalition rather than face an election.

In retrospect, many Grits must be thanking their lucky stars they were spared having to go through with it, the Governor General bowing instead to Harper's request to prorogue Parliament. (Perhaps some were even counting on this: it seems hard to believe they would not have considered the possibility.) Had the coalition attempted to form a government, it would almost certainly have collapsed in short order: having extracted as much extra spending as they could, the NDP and the Bloc would most likely abandon it in the spring, rather than wait for Dion's replacement to be elected. Indeed, it might very well have destroyed the Liberal party.

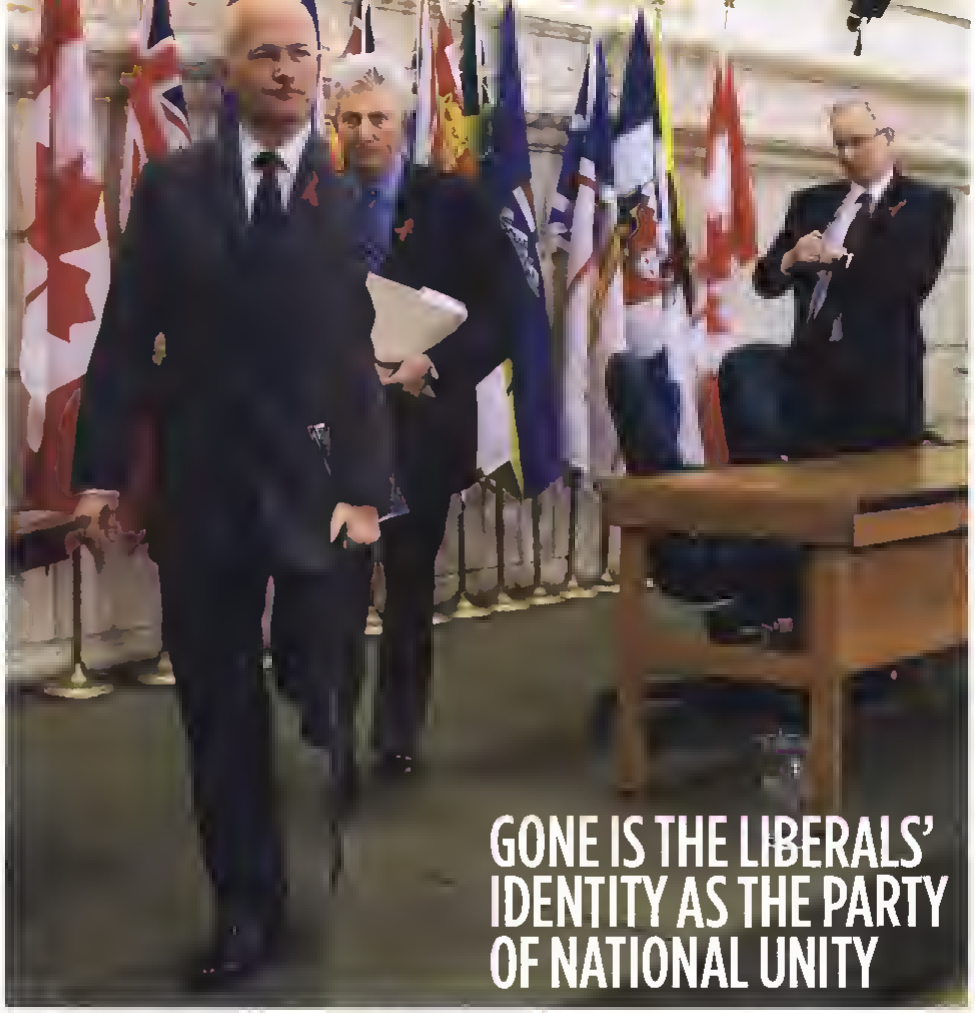
But the damage is considerable as it is. Just the prospect of a coalition takeover prompted a 10- to 15-point swing in public opinion in favour of the Conservatives—from 32 per cent in a Nanos poll just before the economic statement, to an average of 47 per cent in four polls (Ipsos, Strategic Counsel, Ekos and Compas) taken last week. In the West, in particular, where the Liberals desperately need to start building a base if they are to have any hope of winning future elections, the affair may well prove to be a second National Energy Program. But the cost may be even greater in Ontario, once a Liberal fortress, where the Conservatives are now polling in excess of 50 per cent.

Worse, by being seen to get too cozy with the Bloc, they may well have handed Harper a historic strategic opening—to make the Conservatives the Canada Party, replacing the Liberals as the guardians of national unity. To be sure, there were large dollops of humbug in Harper's attacks on the "separatist coalition," given his own past flirtations with the Bloc. Unhappily for the Liberals, they remain in the past: whatever Harper may have been willing to do with the Bloc, it never came to anything. Whereas the Liberals' "accord" with the Bloc is on public display, in photos of Dion, Layton and Duceppe at that remarkably ill-advised signing ceremony that will live in Tory attack ads for years to come. And while his replacement by Michael Ignatieff, with his carefully telegraphed skepticism toward the coalition, may signal the Liberals' attempts to disentangle themselves from what Dion has wrought, this may not prove so easy as all that. Not only the Conservatives, but the other members of the coalition, will be quick to remind people that Ignatieff's signature is on that letter to the Governor General formally committing the Liberals to the coalition, along with that of every other member of his caucus. And even if he now renounces the coalition, he must somehow extinguish from public memory not only his own past statements in support of it, but the continuing and highly public enthusiasm of Bob Rae, his nearest rival.

Yet the reality is the coalition is dead. Much as Ignatieff might like to hold it in reserve—"coalition if necessary, but not necessarily coalition"—as a deterrent to future Conservative adventurism, the threat lacks credibility. The public's reaction has seen to that. When, therefore, the Tories bring down their budget on Jan. 27, there can be only two possible outcomes. Either the budget will pass, or the House will be dissolved and an election called. And as the Liberals cannot possibly face an election at this time—Ignatieff has reportedly been brutally frank about this in caucus—the far greater likelihood is that the budget will pass.

Unless . . . Unless the Tories can find some way to make it impossible for the Liberals to accept it. They have to be careful: they don't want to lose the public. But suppose they were to spend the next several weeks advertising their willingness to work with the opposition—especially the Liberals. And suppose they were to take on board many of the opposition demands: a massive bailout for the auto industry. Billions more in infrastructure spending, complete with "shovels in the ground" photo-ops. A feel good meeting with the premiers in mid-January, ending in some sort of agreement to "work together" on the economy. All wrapped up in a budget whose every second word is "stimulus." And now suppose, having given the Liberals just about everything they could ask for, they also include the party financing proposal.

Bundle up, Grits. It's going to be a long winter. M



**THE IMAGE of the Bloc, Liberals and NDP at the signing ceremony will live in Tory ads**

ADRIAN WYLD/CP

**GONE IS THE LIBERALS' IDENTITY AS THE PARTY OF NATIONAL UNITY**



RIGHT AT HOME No longer an outsider, Charest is even finding allies in the Bloc

# GETTING QUEBEC

## Charest's evolution to an Ottawa-spurning centrist is complete

BY PHILIPPE OOHIRR • "I am very proud to be a Quebecer" With that paraphrase of René Lévesque's famous line from the night, 32 years ago, that the Parti Québécois won its first majority government, Jean Charest's turn as English Canada's designated custodian in Quebec came to an end It's taken him three consecutive mandates—the first three-peat since Maurice Duplessis accomplished the feat in 1956—but Charest has finally become a Quebecer

Since arriving on the province's political scene in 1998, Charest has been an outsider struggling to overcome the idea he was dispatched by Ottawa to save Quebec from itself His disastrous first mandate, during which his government's popularity plunged to record lows, did little to change the impression he just doesn't *get* Quebec But after being reduced to a minority government in March 2007, Charest recognized he needed a political makeover Quebecers weren't necessarily ever going to *love* him—federalist premiers rarely become as mythical as sovereigntist ones—but his political career depended on him finding a way to get them to at least *like* him

Over the past 18 months, he has cultivated a new identity out went the condescending politician whose ambition outstripped his skills, in came the defender of Quebec's social-democratic consensus "Quebec is governed from the centre," says pollster Jean-Marc Leger of Leger Marketing "Charest only became popular once he became more nationalist and more centrist The right wing ultra-federalist gave way to a politician who's looking more and more like Robert Bourassa"

Like Bourassa, Charest has positioned himself as both a critic of the federal government and a supporter of the federation. In fact, many credit his stinging rebuke of the Harper government over its arts funding cuts and plan to dramatically stiffen youth prison sentences during October's federal election campaign with snuffing out the Conservatives' chances of a breakthrough in Quebec But quoting Lévesque and channelling Bourassa doesn't guarantee Charest's place among the province's great premiers For that, he'll have to go toe-to-toe with Ottawa—and win at least a few rounds

Charest already knows what he wants During the federal election campaign, he publicly issued a list of demands to the federal parties, notably calling on them to give Quebec a leading role in the selection of Supreme Court justices and to limit the federal government's spending powers in provincial jurisdictions He's already found some unlikely allies the Bloc Québécois heartily endorsed the list What's more, it nearly succeeded in settling one of the key demands before the federal government had even passed its first budget. in exchange for propping up a Liberal-NDP coalition, the Bloc wanted Quebec's share of funding for post secondary education to be increased by $820 million over two years The Bloc's house leader, Pierre Paquette, told *Maclean's* securing funding for Quebec's manufacturing and forestry sectors would top his party's priority list in the short term, but that Charest's other demands are "entirely coherent" with the Bloc's platform

With a first ministers' meeting scheduled for Jan 16 and the Tories set to deliver a federal budget 11 days later, sovereigntists in Ottawa will likely link arms with federalists in Quebec City again, says University of Montreal political scientist Bruce Hicks "Without a doubt, you'll see the Bloc standing up and quoting Jean Charest, which would have been unthinkable 10 years ago," he says

Still, Charest's fiercest fights may take place in Quebec City The premier spent the past year beating up on an inexperienced and incompetent opposition in the form of Mario Dumont's ADQ But the ADQ's virtual disappearance from the political map—it was reduced to a meagre seven seats in Monday's election—has left a rejuvenated PQ in its place Whereas Dumont could never project either himself or his party as a legitimate alternative to the Charest government, PQ Leader Pauline Marois undoubtedly can "He's got a slim majority but he's no better off," says William Tetley, who served as a cabinet minister under Bourassa in the 1970s "Is it a victory? I think it's a pyrrhic victory."

With an unexpectedly narrow majority in Quebec City and a rapidly sinking economy, Charest may struggle to live up to his new identity as the modern-day Bourassa But Quebecers are clearly hoping he won't fall back on the version of him they nearly kicked out of office a year and a half ago M

PHOTOGRAPH BY LIAM MALONEY

FOR THE RECORD

**WHAT NIXON REALLY THOUGHT OF TRUDEAU**

"I got the note, John, on what to say to this son of a bitch Trudeau"—Former U S president Richard Nixon speaking to his treasury secretary, John Connally, about how to deal with prime minister Pierre Trudeau Recently released by the Nixon library, the recording was made hours before Nixon and Trudeau met to discuss trade on Dec. 6, 1971 Recordings also capture the meeting that inspired Nixon to call Trudeau a "pompous egghead"



# Wanted man fakes death to fool cops

BY NANCY MACDONALD • A Halifax man, alleged to have faked his own death to escape charges of sexually assaulting a young girl, has turned up very much alive in a B C provincial courthouse

In March, Jeremy Daniel Oakley, 37, will finally stand trial for sexual assault and sexual interference with a person under 16 He was arrested near Peggy's Cove, N S., this summer as the result of an unrelated child pornography investigation It wasn't until he was fingerprinted that police realized he was a previously wanted suspect who had been presumed dead His case is raising troubling questions about how RCMP officers were duped—not by a death certificate or hard evidence confirming Oakley's death—but by an obituary that ran in a Halifax newspaper

In July 2004, Oakley was arrested in Nova Scotia for sexually assaulting a nine-year-old Nanaimo girl He was returned to B C, where a judge released him on bail Less than three months later, the Halifax *Chronicle Herald* ran an obituary stating that Oakley had "passed away suddenly in Toronto as a result of a motor vehicle accident" The obituary also said that he was "survived by his wife and four children," and that "at the request of the family" the funeral would be held in Vancouver at "a date yet to be determined."



AFTER THE obituary, the Mountie called off the chase

The RCMP appear to have bought the ruse hook, line and sinker Mounties listed Oakley as deceased on the nationwide Canadian Police Information Centre computer, and the Nanaimo regional Crown abated the charges against him It wasn't until this spring, when Oakley was arrested for allegedly using the Internet to share a video on how to sexually abuse children, that the RCMP became aware that the wanted man they'd given up for dead was still alive and at large

Oakley will now face charges for both possessing child pornography and the earlier assault charge "The girl—now 14 and living in Ontario—still has a vivid memory of the event, and is fully willing to testify," says Gary O'Brien, a spokesperson for the Nanaimo RCMP M

# Calgary may label big oil 'unethical'



CALGARY CITY council is looking into socially responsible investing

BY NICHOLAS BÖHLER • Calgary probably owes more to the oil sands than any city in Canada. So it's a little odd that it may become the first to proclaim investing in those projects unethical That possibility emerged last week, when Calgary aldermen looked into adopting socially responsible investing, or SRI, an increasingly popular investing approach that eschews "unethical" practices such as child labour, weapons manufacturing and excessive emissions

If Calgary adopts the SRI philosophy for its $2.5 billion portfolio, it will raise a tough question for a city that's home to the headquarters of such energy giants as EnCana and Petro-Canada: do the oil sands, the fastest growing generator of greenhouse gases in Canada, constitute an ethical investment? Ald. Joe Ceci, for one, isn't so sure "We should be able to say to Calgarians that we're investing in things that are contributing to a positive world," he argues "If environmental factors on some of the companies out there are less than sustainable, then we should not be investing in those areas."

A finance committee vote on whether the city should seek an appropriate SRI framework produced a tie, forcing the matter to city council this week It's a contentious issue "We're looking at the lowest risk, the highest return," says Ald Linda Fox-Mellway, who worries that no rules exist to determine what makes an investment ethical "If we start getting involved in strictly the environmental piece, we can really limit our returns"

Still, proponent Ald Druh Farrell argues that by establishing rules for suitable investments, the city might actually encourage some of the oil sands outfits to go green. "Some companies are better than others in how they treat the environment," she says "These are things that we can have some influence on by how we invest." M

ANDREW VAUGHAN/CP JEFF MCINTOSH/CP

# A tiny airline with really big bonuses

BY COLIN CAMPBELL • How much CEOs deserve to be paid is a topic of much debate in these dark economic days But spats over executive pay are not confined to the boardrooms of New York and Toronto The latest one is taking place in Canada's Arctic, where a scandal is brewing over the huge bonuses doled out to senior executives at First Air

The airline, controlled by Inuit-owned Makivik Corp., handed company executives $1 5 million worth of bonuses last summer Pita Aatam, chairman of First Air and president of Makivik, received a record-breaking bonus of $600 000, and George Berthe, Makivik's corporate secretary, received a bonus of $250,000, according to *Nunatsiaq News* By comparison, the head of Air Canada, Montie Brewer, took home a $690,000 bonus last year—only $90,000 more than Aatam, even though Air Canada has revenues of $2.5 billion compared to just $200 million for First Air.



CRITICS ARE OUTRAGED at little First Air's $1.5 million in bonuses

Since the bonuses became public this fall, there's been a growing push to have the money returned. "We can't let this fester any longer," said Liberal Senator Charlie Watt, a former president of Makivik, and one of the most vocal opponents of the bonuses He has been calling for an emergency meeting on the subject and even the possible resignation of the directors involved.

Makivik, however, isn't backing down In a statement, the company claims that the bonuses were ratified by the board, and paid by a company that "generated a favourable return." They "were earned, were reasonable and fair," says the company Far from being contrite, Makivik's executives say "a number of us feel that these amounts were long over due — and could have been higher"

But opponents argue that the bonuses are outrageous because Makivik is no ordinary company It's a non-profit owned by the Inuit of northern Quebec with a mandate focused on the political, social and economic development in the region. Not only do the fat bonuses undermine the company's credibility, argues Watt, but they've turned the collective into little more than a "piggy bank to a few" M

# TRAIL OF TERROR

## The horror in Mumbai is traced to a group with strong ties to al-Qaeda

BY MICHAEL PETROU



THE SCENE at the Taj Mahal hotel during the attacks, gunmen on the loose in Mumbai

It is unlikely that Muhammad Ajmal Kasab drew a second glance from onlookers when he walked into Mumbai's historic Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus railway station a little after 9 p.m. on Nov. 26. The 21-year-old man's upper body was heavily muscled, but his clean shaven face was broad and youthful, softened by the remnants of baby fat. He wore sneakers, a pink wrist band, baggy cargo pants and a T-shirt with a Versace designer label across the chest. With a blue backpack slung across his shoulder, he looked like a typical college student enjoying a bit of carefree travel—perhaps on his way to Goa, a favourite destination a little further down the coast.

But in his backpack, in addition to dried fruit and a mobile phone, Kasab carried grenades and ammunition magazines for the AK-47 assault rifle he had managed to conceal as well. When he reached crowded platform 13, Kasab and his partner Ismail Khan began shooting indiscriminately at commuters and diners in the train station café. The crowd panicked and those who could, fled. One of two police at the station tried to return fire while hiding in an alcove, but he was armed with a Second World War-era rifle and was forced to scramble for shelter while Kasab and Khan blazed away from their hips with automatic weapons.

The pair left the station and ambushed a police van, spraying it with gunfire and dumping the bodies of the slain officers on the road, one of whom was the anti-terrorism squad chief Hemant Karkare. Unknown to them, two police, including Const. Arun Jadhav, were alive but wounded in the back seat. The van careened through the city, with one of the two terrorists driving and the other shooting out the window. When Jadhav's colleague's cellphone rang, one of the gunman turned around and shot him. The terrorists said little, joking at one point about a police officer they murdered who had been wearing a bullet-proof vest. Jadhav, who had been shot three times, was unable to reach his weapon. "I wish I could have lifted my gun," he would later say from his hospital bed.

When one of the van's tires went flat, Kasab and Khan abandoned the vehicle and hijacked another car. Police intercepted the pair and shot Khan dead. An enraged crowd at the scene descended on Kasab, kicking and thrashing him with sticks before police intervened and saved him. Here, Kasab's perverted good fortune turned. He would later tell police that he had been trained to "kill to the last breath." Instead, Kasab was captured alive. While he initially begged medical staff to give him saline to save his life, following interrogations by police he has reportedly said, "I don't want to live."

But Kasab is alive and talking. He is now telling Indian investigators about the attacks, how they were planned, and who the people were who sent him and his terrorist colleagues on their mission. The picture Kasab paints is blurry and is further confused by Indian officials—perhaps numbering as many as 15—who sat in on his interrogations and are furiously leaking often inconsistent reports of what they heard to local and international media. Thrown in recollections from the odd hospital volunteer who might have overheard a snippet of conversation and the story that emerges is one that will change as further evidence is compiled, and rumours and hearsay are separated from facts. For the moment, though, Kasab's testimony—at least the version of it passed on by Indian officials crowded around his hospital bed—is the foundation for what is so far known about the atrocities in Mumbai and who was behind them.

**Muhammad Ajmal Kasab's** road to infamy began over a year ago at a mountain training camp near Muzaffarabad, in Pakistan-administered Kashmir. The camp was run by Lashkar e-Taiba, a radical Islamist organization linked to international jihadist groups, including al-Qaeda, as well as to Pakistan's spy agency, Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI)—which has long sponsored Islamist insurgent groups, including the Taliban, in both Afghanistan and Indian administered Kashmir.

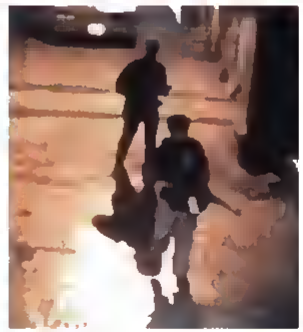
Details about Kasab's life before arriving at the camp are vague. He is reportedly from Faridkot village in Pakistan's Punjab province. His rural village lies in an area that is a rich recruiting ground for jihadists. He grew up poor, the son of a snack vendor, and left the village about four years ago. According to some press reports, Kasab told interrogators that his father "sold" him to a leading member of Lashkar e-Taiba, for about $4,500. One Faridkot villager told journalist Saeed Shah that Kasab would return home about once a year and talk about "freeing" Kashmir from Indian rule.

In Muzaffarabad, Kasab met other members of the eventual team of 10 who would assault Mumbai. Some reports have it that they were selected from a larger group of 24 trainees, and that not all were initially trained at the same camp. They were reportedly given false names and discouraged from talking with each other about topics other than their mission. They were trained in the use of explosives, urban warfare, and hand-to-hand combat. At another Kashmiri camp near the massive Mangla Dam, they practised beach landings. All became extremely muscular in the course of their training. An Indian official suggested that traces of steroids were found in the blood of the slain terrorists, along with cocaine and other stimulants that allowed the 10 men to battle hundreds of Indian police and soldiers for 60 hours, apparently without sleep.

Kasab and his colleagues travelled to Rawalpindi when their training was over. Here, they memorized their targets: the Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus railway station, the Taj Mahal and Oberoi hotels, and the Chabad House Jewish centre. A reconnaissance team had reportedly chosen the targets and the routes to reach them in advance. Extra ammunition and weapons were allegedly cached in at least one of the hotels, and explosives might also have been smuggled into the city—perhaps with the assistance of local collaborators. Indian police have arrested several native Indians on suspicion of a connection to the attacks.

Kasab's assault team then moved to the Pakistani port city of Karachi to begin their journey to Mumbai by ship. A wealthy gangster named Dawood Ibrahim makes his home there. He is originally from Mumbai, and his crime syndicate, "D-Company," still controls smuggling into the city. Although he has a taste for lavish parties, Bollywood movies, and women, Ibrahim began moving in Islamist circles in the 1990s and is believed to have financed the 1993 bombings in Mumbai that killed more than 250 people. Some have argued that, given his extensive connections in Mumbai's criminal underworld, he might have played a role in these attacks as well. He is thought to be living under the protection of the ISI. India has demanded that he be handed over; Pakistan denies knowledge of where he is.

When the terrorists left Karachi, the Indian navy was boarding and searching foreign ships in the Arabian Sea, and the team grew nervous. Abandoning their vessel and using motorized dinghies, they hijacked a local fishing boat, the Kuber, and killed everyone but the captain, whom they forced to steer for India. As they closed in on Mumbai, the terrorists slit the captain's throat, climbed back into their dinghies and slipped into Mumbai. They brushed aside questions from the harbourmaster, split into teams, and raced into the night. Within minutes, Mumbai was awash in carnage and mayhem that would last more than two days. Kasab and his fellow terrorists murdered almost 200 people. He is the only one of the 10 attackers still alive.



DAVID GUTTENFELDER/AP, REUTERS

**LIBERATING KASHMIR IS LASHKAR'S MAIN GOAL, BUT IT ALSO HAS A 'MAXIMALIST AGENDA FOR GLOBAL JIHAD'**

**Amid the many** horrific details that Kasab has disclosed, by far the most consequential is his claim to have been trained and dispatched by Lashkar e-Taiba. While unproven, it is a credible admission and is supported by intelligence agencies in both India and the United States. Pakistan initially said it had seen no evidence linking the attacks to any Pakistani groups. But earlier this week the Pakistani army raided a Lashkar-e-Taiba camp near Muzaffarabad and arrested the group's operational chief, Zakiur Rehman Lakhvi—an implicit acknowledgement that it, too, accepts Lashkar's possible responsibility for the Mumbai assault.

Lashkar-e-Taiba, whose name means "Army of the Pure," has its origins in the late 1980s and early 1990s as the military wing of the Pakistani Islamist organization Markaz al-Dawa wal Irshad, which has since changed its name to Jamaat-ud-Dawah. It was created with the assistance of the ISI to wage an insurgency in Indian controlled Kashmir and to train other Muslim extremists in India. Accord

ing to Husain Haqqani, a former professor at Boston University and now Pakistan's ambassador to the U S , the group, which promotes the ultra-conservative Wahhabi form of Islam, was supported with Saudi money Bruce Riedel, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution who spent three decades working for the CIA, says Osama bin Laden was also an early supporter

Lashkar-e-Taiba was officially banned by Pakistan in 2002, following heavy pressure on Pakistan from the U S But it continues to operate behind its still-legal front organization, Jamaat-ud-Dawah, which claims to be a charity, and does help many poor Pakistanis. The Muzaffarabad camp, for example, officially functioned under the banner of Jamaat-ud-Dawah, rather than Lashkar-e-Taiba Jamaat's leader, Hafiz Muhammad Saeed, denies any association with Lashkar-e-Taiba, but it is widely understood that he leads that group, too—given that he founded it.

Although liberating Kashmir is Lashkar's primary goal, it has adopted what Haqqani has described in a 2005 essay as "a maximalist agenda for global jihad." Haqqani cites a Markaz al-Dawa wal-Irshad publication titled "Why Are We Waging Jihad?" that describes the U S , Israel, and India as enemies of Islam The publication goes on to list several often cited reasons for jihad, including facilitating the conversion to and practice of Islam, ensuring Islam's ascendancy, and liberating Muslim territories under non Muslim occupation. On this last point, Lashkar's rhetoric echoes that of Osama bin Laden Supposedly occupied Muslim lands include Spain, India, Bulgaria, Hungary, Cyprus, Sicily, Ethiopia, Israel and Palestine, as well as parts of Russia, China, France and Switzerland All these territories "were Muslim lands, and it is our duty to get them back from unbelievers."

To this end, Lashkar-e-Taiba co-operates with other jihadist groups One Lashkar militant in Pakistan told a local researcher hired by *Maclean's* that some members of his organization regularly meet with al-Qaeda and the Taliban to discuss strategy "Not everyone agrees with these meetings," he says "Since the war in Afghanistan started, there have been disagreements about how to fight our enemies We are surrounded by them now" He said some Lashkar members who have embraced the global jihad might have been involved in the Mumbai attacks, but he doesn't think the group as a whole was behind it.

Lashkar has sent its members to fight with the Taliban in Afghanistan and with Islamist insurgents in Iraq At least seven Lashkar members were killed there in 2003. "The powerful Western world is terrorizing Muslims We are being invaded, humiliated, manipulated and looted. How can we respond but through





## LASHKAR'S CO-OPERATION WITH AL-QAEDA HAS SOLIDIFIED SINCE 9/11. LINKS BETWEEN THE TWO ARE 'EXTENSIVE.'

jihad?" Lashkar leader Hafiz Muhammad Saeed said in the weeks after the American-led invasion of Iraq. "We must fight against the evil trio, America, Israel, and India Suicide mussions are in accordance with Islam. In fact, a suicide attack is the best form of jihad."

Lashkar's co-operation with al-Qaeda appears to have solidified since the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks Links between the two groups are "extensive," Bruce Hoffman, a professor of security studies at Georgetown University and a former scholar-in-residence for counterterrorism at the CIA, told *Maclean's* "I would describe them as al-Qaeda's stalking horse in many respects. They have global ambitions, and they play very directly into the global jihad They're much more than a Kashmiri separatist group."

Senior al-Qaeda member Abu Zubaydah was captured in a Lashkar safe house in Pakistan in 2002 Others have met the same fate Gary Schroen, the CIA's former station chief in Islamabad who led the first CIA team into Afghanistan after 9/11, has noted that "since 2002, whenever a raid has been conducted in Pakistan against al-Qaeda, al-Qaeda members are found being hosted by militant Pakistanis, primarily from the LeT group." According to Riedel, Lashkar actively recruits among Pakistan's large diaspora in Britain.

What remains unclear is Lashkar's relationship with Pakistan's government and the ISI. Lashkar-e-Taiba is "a creation of the ISI and the Pakistani government," Hoffman says But he notes that many of the connections that bound Lashkar to the ISI have "frayed or atrophied" as Lashkar expanded its reach beyond Kashmir, and the government was pressured to rein it in. "This historically is not unusual if a government supports terrorist organizations where there is a commonality of aims—in this case the liberation of Kashmir," Hoffman says. "But then very often the terrorist groups divert and pursue their own agenda I don't think the ISI necessarily has the same interest in global jihad."

India's retort, quite naturally, would be that even if Pakistan has let slip its grip on Lashkar's leash, the dog still sleeps in Islamabad's backyard. Lashkar and its front organization Jamaat-ud-Dawah have hundreds of schools, mosques, medical clinics and offices, in addition to training camps Until the raid on the Lashkar camp this week, these were rarely targeted "It depends how you define complicity," Hoffman says, when asked about Pakistan's responsibility "Are they complicit in the sense that the Pakistani government was involved in the attacks? That's one thing But are they complicit in the sense that Lashkar-e-Taiba is allowed to operate almost unmolested in Pakistan? I mean, yeah."





DEVASTATION AT the railroad station (left, top); rescued hotel guests (left, bottom); crime boss Dawood Ibrahim (above, left); Lashkar founder Hafiz Muhammad Saeed

Complicating the question of accountability is the fact that even the ISI does not have control over all of its agents—some of whom are more loyal to the Islamist militant groups they helped create than to their government A senior member of the ISI told a *Maclean's* researcher that elements of the security services warn radical Islamist groups when government forces are sent to apprehend them. "Whatever intelligence we get," he says, requesting anonymity, "quickly becomes obsolete We hear about a meeting of the senior leadership but before we can swoop in, they know. They shift and we come up empty-handed."

This ISI official's frustration with his rogue spies reflects a larger lesson Pakistan is learning about the dangers of sowing the wind. For years, Pakistan's army and spy agency quietly funded and trained Islamist terror groups, political parties, and even aspirant governments—such as Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jamiat-e-Islami, and the Taliban—as a means of projecting influence and, most often, of hitting India while retaining a semblance of plausible deniability But now the whirlwind has come home Islamist militias, including a Pakistani version of the Taliban, have launched an insurrection along the country's northwest frontier with Afghanistan, and Islamist terror attacks are increasingly frequent elsewhere across the country One such attack last December killed former prime minister Benazir Bhutto, who had returned home to run for office and had promised to defeat the Islamist insurgents Her husband, Asaf Ali Zardari, is now the nation's elected president

Pakistan's civilian government is hitting back It has sent the army into the country's Tribal Areas, where al-Qaeda, the Pakistani Taliban and affiliated Islamist groups have found refuge and planned several international terror attacks But these offensives produce a backlash Among the motivations for the attacks on Mumbai might have been a desire to relieve pressure on Islamists in the Tribal Areas by ratcheting up tensions with India in the east "Our brothers in the Tribal Areas are suffering," says the Lashkar-e-Taiba member. "The people who carried out this attack probably want to damage Indian and Pakistani relations so that Pakistan is forced to send troops back to the Indian border" Zardari has also speculated that the Mumbai attacks were designed to "divert attention from the real war between the terrorists and the Pakistani army in the Tribal Areas"

It's a sensible strategy, and one with a precedent The December 2001 terrorist attack on the Indian parliament brought India and Pakistan to the brink of war, as each nation mobilized one million men for nearly a year As the Pakistani journalist Ahmed Rashid notes in his recent book, *Descent into Chaos*, Pakistan was forced to move its troops away from the Afghan border to face the Indian army in the east. This allowed the Taliban and al-Qaeda escaping from Afghanistan to slip into Pakistan and establish a safe haven there

Today, as in late 2001, the Taliban, al-Qaeda, and other radical Islamists on the Afghan-Pakistan frontier risk being squeezed between the Pakistani army—now acting with more resolve—and NATO and U S forces in Afghanistan. American unmanned Predator drones send Hellfire missiles into militants' homes on the Pakistani side of the border, and Barack Obama's pledge to send thousands of additional soldiers to Afghanistan will only increase the pressure. But were India and Pakistan to move to a war footing, this pressure would dissipate—Pakistani troops would withdraw, the Pakistani Taliban would take more territory, and al-Qaeda would likely be emboldened by its greater freedom

It may still come to this. India's moderate government, led by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and his Congress party, is weak and will face demands for revenge—both from the general public and the opposition Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party, which may whip up anti-Muslim and anti-Pakistani rhetoric in an upcoming election. Already there has been heated public anger on both sides of the border

And yet the governments of the two nuclear armed nations, which have been creeping toward peace since 2004, have so far shown restraint Pakistan has promised to co-operate with India in its investigation, and its Muzaffarabad raid suggests Islamabad is willing to back up its words with action The Pakistani government fears an Indian military strike. It is also facing enormous pressure from the U S., which has provided Pakistan with more than US$10 billion in military and economic assistance since 2001 But with suspected Islamist terrorists attacking civilian targets in Pakistan, even in the aftermath of the assault on Mumbai, it is becoming unavoidably apparent that the two countries share a common enemy. It's too soon to know what all the ramifications of the assault on Mumbai will be But if, as seems likely, the attacks were designed to push India and Pakistan toward a deeper conflict, it's not unrealistic to hope that they will backfire M

*With Adnan R. Khan*

AP FAISAL MAHMOOD/REUTERS

REUTERS AP

THE ISSUE IN...

**BRITAIN: FLIPPING OVER FLIP-FLOPS FOR DRINKERS**

Taxpayers in England are outraged over a new policy that will see police handing out flip-flops to female partygoers in the resort town of Torbay to help them make it home safely Police say the shoes are designed for women who would otherwise have to totter home in high heels. The footwear, which has responsible drinking messages printed on it, is being paid for by a $57,000 government grant covering several general safety programs

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# Closing in on the 'Butcher of Srebrenica'

BY RACHEL MENDELSON • Serbia stepped up its hunt for fugitive war crimes suspect Ratko Mladic, even as European Union officials reiterated this week that the country's sought-after EU membership is contingent on the arrest of the former Bosnian Serb general. Indeed, the fact that Mladic—wanted by the UN's Hague based tribunal for allegedly masterminding atrocities against Bosnian Muslims during the Bosnian war—remains at large, prompted the European Council of Ministers on Monday to delay a discussion about signing a preliminary trade agreement reached with Belgrade last year.

In the Serbian capital, elite anti-terrorist units were dispatched to put pressure on Mladic's support network, carrying out an extensive raid on the home of his son, Darko. The Hague tribunal, which gained traction with the arrest of former Bosnian Serb president Radovan Karadzic in July, has pledged to remain open until Mladic, who is believed to be holed up in Serbia, is brought to trial. Aside from Croatian Serb Goran Hadzic, his is the lone name on the court's wanted list. Dubbed "the Butcher of Srebrenica" for allegedly directing the slaughter of 7,500 unarmed men and boys in that eastern Bosnian town, Mladic was indicted in 1995 on counts that include genocide.



SERBIAN POLICE surround the family apartment of Ratko Mladic

MARKO DJURICA/REUTERS JUAN BARRETO/GETTY FERNANDO LLANO/AP REUTERS

But he still enjoys hero status among many Serbs, and military collusion has in the past been blamed for keeping him hidden. As the political will to apprehend him appears to be strengthening, so do the voices of his supporters. The FBI has reportedly questioned several U.S. citizens of Serb origin about a rash of death threats against war crimes prosecutor Vladimir Vukcevic. A spokesman from Vukcevic's office said the "basic circle" of suspects has been pinpointed. "Every time there is an intensive action to locate Mladic, threatening letters are sent," he said. M

# Chávez: still pushing for more power




NOW CHÁVEZ aims to change the constitution so he can run in 2013

BY MICHAEL PETSOU • Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez is nothing if not persistent. In 1992, as the attempted coup d'état he had launched collapsed around him, Chavez, then an army officer, gave himself up to loyal government forces and admitted he had failed, "*por ahora*"—for now. The phrase, suggesting that no defeat is final, stuck and became a rallying cry for his supporters, who are drawn largely from among Venezuela's poor. In 2007, as elected president, Chávez tried to revamp the constitution to expand state power and abolish presidential term limits. Voters rejected his proposed changes in a referendum last December. Once again, Chávez accepted the results "*por ahora*," and now he is trying again, seeking a constitutional amendment that would let him run again after his current term ends in 2013.

Chávez says he needs more time to advance Venezuela's "Bolivarian Revolution." Citizens will likely have their chance to vote on his proposal early next year, provided Chávez's supporters gather enough signatures to request a referendum. But already Venezuela's opposition is preparing a campaign aimed at getting voters to reject it. Although Chávez has established free health clinics and subsidized grocery stores in the slums, much of the country is still mired in poverty, and his critics charge that he is an authoritarian who has politicized the education system, and weakened typical checks and balances.

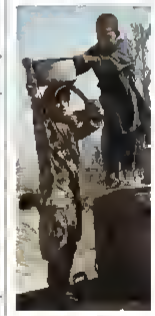
Significantly, Venezuela's students are playing a prominent role in the movement to reject Chávez's bid. Last year, they organized large street protests and will likely do so again. According to Stratfor, a private intelligence agency, Venezuela's student movement has links with veterans of Otpor, the youth group that was instrumental in ousting former Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic in 2000, and that later inspired similar democratic uprisings in Georgia and Ukraine. M

# Iran faces terrorism from within

BY PATSICIA TSESLE • Iran, typically seen as a united, if confrontational, nation in international politics, is developing a domestic terrorism problem at home.

Last week, deputy police commander Ahmad Reza Radan announced that a group of policemen captured by a militant group called Jundullah had been "martyred." A total of 16 police officers were originally kidnapped from a checkpoint in the province of Sistan-Baluchistan in June. The situation turned deadly when Jundullah, which has fought for the rights of minority Sunni Baluchis since the 1980s, released footage showing three officers being killed this summer. Now the rest are dead. The government prosecutor general has vowed a "tooth-breaking response" to the murders.

The minority Baluchis number around two million and are mainly concentrated in the eastern province of Sistan-Baluchistan, on the border with Pakistan and Afghanistan. This poverty-stricken province has the worst health, literacy and sanitation indicators in Iran. According to the human rights organization Amnesty International, the Baluchis have faced increasingly fierce persecution by the Persian-dominated government since the 2005 election of hard-line President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Many of them have been forced from their government jobs and at least 200,000 have left for employment in other Persian Gulf nations.



ATTACKS ARE escalating in Iran as minority groups retaliate

Along with the Baluchis, the Iranian government has subjected other minorities—including Arabs, Azeri Turks and Kurds—to discriminatory laws and human rights abuses. Together, these groups make up about half of Iran's population. The groups are mostly concentrated in the border regions, and have sizable populations—and support—outside the country. Many dream of creating independent homelands, and there is little doubt that Tehran is increasingly viewing their existence as a threat to the nation's future. M



PETER BREGG/RCI KEITH BEATY/TORONTO STAR

# A VISIONARY LEADER

## Ted Rogers thrived on risk, hard work and a drive to link the country with new technology

**BY PETER C. NEWMAN**

No one equalled his daring

Ted Rogers spent most of 50 years in business guided by his viscera and the message on his business card that carried the self-designated title, "Senior Salesperson." His profession was selling himself, and he succeeded beyond his wildest imaginings. Ted's reputation had been forged as an entrepreneur extraordinaire—the high-wire trapeze artist of Canadian business. But by the end of his life he had turned himself into the indispensable alpha presence within the Canadian communications community who recognized, harnessed and marketed the technologies of the future. While he was known better for being a risk-taker than a pioneer, the two strains came together to define his personal brand.

He prided himself on being the kind of entrepreneur who thrived as much on risk as its rewards. From a modest start, as the owner of a one-station FM network, and his moves into cable, then wireless and iPhones—he was always there, ahead of his Canadian competitors, suffering the penalties of being the innovator in a country where anybody who survives puberty thinks they're ahead of the game.

Out of all of those tests by fire came a new and impressive maturity and the evolution of a dynamic communications empire worth $25 billion that Ted Rogers created from a standing start. In its various incarnations, Rogers Communications amassed assets worth $15 billion and employed 29,000. Under Rogers' inspired hands on management, it became a world-class operator and initiator of 21st century communications technologies. (Rogers' private fortune was estimated at more than $7 billion.)

Ted and I attended Upper Canada College, the boys' private school in Toronto, as boarders at Seaton House. We kept in touch and I later wrote up his various exploits in my several Establishment books, where I dubbed him the Canadian corporate world's "River boat Gambler." It was a title he amply earned, not by frequenting riverboats, but by creating the country's most innovative and most powerful media empire based almost entirely on his nerve and his bank loans.

In the early 1990s, when he took a run at Maclean Hunter, then Canada's premier publishing house, I described the standoff in *Maclean's* as an epic showdown between a Riverboat Gambler and a Village Parson. "I guess that's true," Rogers quipped, the next time I met him. "But I don't know why they keep referring to me as a Village Parson."



TED ROGERS in 1978, when he was still in the process of building his cable empire

Now, upon his death of heart failure at age 75, his early exploits seem hard to credit—even in retrospect. Ted Rogers only occasionally slowed down long enough to be called an incurable workaholic, but most of the time he made that category seem comically inadequate. Negotiating deals and financing them was life to him, everything else (except his family) was distraction. His work habits more closely resembled the schedule of one of those donkeys that used to drive water pumps in tropical penal colonies. He never stopped.

His backers were Scotia and Toronto-Dominion bankers who treated him as a phenomenon in the art of financing. He could extract almost any loan from their nervous hands and in the process made these virago number crunchers feel graced for having financed his bounty. Still, each transaction took its toll. Robin Korthals, former president of the Toronto-Dominion Bank where Rogers did most of his initial banking, once confided in me that Ted had burnt out 14 of his most senior credit officers during their 20-year association, with his debts running as high as $5 billion at one time. One of his closest scrapes coincided with the endangered financial status of Brazil, which for some long-forgotten reason Canadian banks felt duty-bound to return to solvency. "No problem," Ted told a startled Bay Street credit officer. "Just think of me as Brazil."

Rogers cited many Golden Rules to live by, but his belief system came down to a single axiom: what he lacked in evidence, he made up for in conviction. He preached that loans in his capable hands created opportunities—the chance to sponsor and exploit the profit side of newness, which proved to be the case. With one exception (Unitel, his challenge to Bell's long distance network), his plans always panned out. There was something un Canadian about his unbridled enthusiasm, even more so because he believed as much in his country as in himself.

Edward Samuel Rogers, Jr. was always special. He was treated as the hero of his own soap operas, instead of just another panting loan applicant. Apart from his solid credentials as a patriotic Canadian, Rogers relied on his Establishment pedigree to get him through a wondrous life, filled equally with singular achievement, the almost sensual thrill of the risk taker, plus an eternally boyish sense of wonderment that he got away with it all.

His brushes with bankruptcy were real. He not only survived to tell the tale but each time persuaded the same lenders to reopen their coffers even wider. He was the most daring entrepreneur in Canadian business history. By his own calculation, he borrowed an astonishing total of $30 billion from the banks (without a single default) and floated equity financing worth $4.5 billion.



ROGERS in the early 80s, with (from left) execs Phil Lind, Barry Ross and Bob Francis

In permanent overdrive, Rogers's idea of reality was whatever he claimed it to be. And he had a point. He had been right before. In 1960, while still a law student at Toronto's Osgoode Hall, he bought CHFI, the tiny, 940-watt radio station that pioneered the new frequency modulation (FM) sound at a time when only five per cent of Toronto homes had FM receivers.

The deal set a pattern. For the next four decades, he would spot a new technology with public appeal and charge into it head long, so that he could exploit the benefits of that first rush of interest and dollars. Most of the time that approach worked fine, except that the pace of new technologies accelerated, and he would still be trying to pay off the loans he required for jumping into the one before, when another required even greater investments. By 1967, he was in the cable television business and eventually put together what was at one time the world's largest cable network, with over two million subscribers.

It was much the same story with mobile phones in the 1980s, where Rogers was far in front of even his closest associates. By late 1982 he had become enamoured of the new cellular technology, but his board of directors emphatically was not. When Ted approached them in 1983 for a modest $500,000 to invest in wireless, every one of the other 16 board members—including his wife, Loretta—voted against him, forcing him to put his own cash on the line. Although Rogers had no idea just how big wireless would become, he was sure it would be the next big thing. Now mobile phones provide $3 billion in yearly cash flow for Rogers and make up almost 80 per cent of its $25-billion market capitalization. Had Ted not been so stubborn, and enough of a gambler to go into wireless on his own, Rogers Communications wouldn't be a fraction of the company it is now.

His pursuit of the new showed again with fibre optic technology in the 1990s, and most recently with iPhones. More than a quarter-million Canadians signed up for the iPhone 3G during the third quarter of 2008, doubling the firm's net income. Though Rogers had to spend $95 million on marketing the iPhone, total revenue climbed 14 per cent or $370 million. It's a bit ironic that in these desperate times, Ted's company is better placed and much more secure than most North American ventures.

That he was driven was obvious. That his ambitions might have some limits was less clear. We talked about his future many times, and the anatomy of our discourse was invariably dominated by the obsession with his father, but that ambition was a moving target.

**'When the board refused to invest $500,000 in cellular, Ted went ahead using his own money'**

"He died early, when I was five and I always wanted to be in his tradition, to be as good as he was," Ted recounted. "The problem is you never felt as if you'd really done it—because once you feel you have, you're in trouble."

The defining anecdote about Ted Rogers dated back to the time when he was a Big Tory on Campus at the University of Toronto—instead of merely looking like one, which he still did at age 75. Hyperactive in Conservative politics, he needed to see then Progressive Conservative prime minister John Diefenbaker on a policy issue but couldn't get an appointment. Finally, granted precisely 10 minutes in his parliamentary office, he was squeezed in between the prime minister's more urgent chores. But when Rogers got in to see him, the Chief spent half the allocated time telling a political joke. Then, he excused himself to use an adjoining bathroom. Realizing that his time was just about up, young Ted barged into the toilet and made his case standing next to a startled but temporarily immobilized prime minister.

Phil Lind, the Rogers Communications vice-chairman who worked with Ted for most of his lengthy career and was one of his best friends, admitted that he was a demanding boss. "Ted worked all the time so, yeah, you could expect calls from him at odd hours."

Rogers readily admitted, "I'm in charge of the department of discontent. I'm discontented with pretty much everything. I like the role. You can really stir things up. It keeps the company moving. When I return from one of my working holidays, I'll say to people, 'Why isn't this done? Why isn't that done? What's been going on around here, anyway?' "

When John Tory, president of the cable company, switched offices from the old Maclean Hunter building to Rogers HQ, he was surprised to find in his new digs a dartboard with a picture of Ted's face on it—presumably to work off the expected frustrations with his boss. The upside of working for Ted was that his senior people felt part of his unique vision, a man who had a sense of how Canadians might one day use future technologies that all too often had made their boss appear almost mad—until it turned out that he was right about it all. They recognized that he was one of a kind and felt privileged to have helped make his vision a reality.

Running a large company, especially a utility like a major cable network, can be reduced to a series of occasions. And Ted's worst occasion—the nightmare that invaded his life—was the day he decided to force subscribers to buy a negative option plan. In the past, Rogers kept increasing the number of channels he offered and raising his monthly rates accordingly. Few subscribers objected because the only way to get a clear TV picture was to buy his service, which enjoyed a monopoly everywhere he operated. But when he decided to institute his compulsory negative option plan, automatically billing subscribers an additional $2.65 each month for five new Canadian specialty channels, while threatening to remove some popular stations if the extra fee wasn't paid, subscribers revolted and forced him to back down.

"I was stunned," Rogers confessed when it was all over. "Now I know how those turbot must have felt swimming toward the Spanish fish boats. From now on, our customers will determine what level of service each one of them will get."

Despite such drawbacks, soon overcome and corrected, Ted Rogers kept insisting that "the best is yet to come"—occasionally adding, under his breath, "because it can't get any worse." He did reduce the corporate debt by selling his local phone assets to the MetroNet Communications Group of Calgary for $1 billion in the spring of 1997 and pledged his company would start paying dividends on Dec. 31, 2003. "I would then like to go into more long term technical pursuits," he proclaimed, "be out of the business, move to another location, and be running some small project, just enough to keep me busy." Yeah, right.

The last time I felt Ted's presence was in April of this year, when I spotted his floating communications capsule, disguised as the luxurious 35-metre $10-million yacht *Loretta Anne*, anchored off Belize, a tiny Mayan republic of a quarter of a million people wedged between Mexico and Guatemala. At that pre-crash time the underdeveloped paradise was the in-vogue destination for sophisticated billionaires.

Along with a few colleagues, I was in a small motorboat powered by a 150-h.p. outboard engine, captained by Bob Dhillon, a senior Calgary real estate operative with major investments there. We were about to venture up an alligator-infested river that snaked through a rainforest where jaguars roamed free, to visit a wilderness spa. I had thought vaguely of visiting Rogers' floating vacation HQ but decided against it, not because I might be disrupting his holiday, but knowing Ted I was certain that I would be interrupting his latest business venture, possibly negotiating wireless rights for the planet Mars over his satellite phone. I remembered Tony Fell, when he was head of RBC Dominion Securities, telling me that he was invited out on Ted's vessel several times but had never seen him at rest. "Being on that boat of his was no holiday. He had a satellite telephone and was on it all the time."

This time, afloat in the Caribbean Sea, it turned out that he had a more intriguing private agenda. While I was there, Rogers secretly purchased an island from Dhillon in the same archipelago where the Four Seasons chain was already building its first "green" hotel, and near another private isle that had just been bought by Leonardo DiCaprio.

The utopia that Ted Rogers had in mind might have been his final escapist domicile. Perhaps after half a century of galley-slave devotion to deifying his late father's inventive spirit, Ted finally realized it was time for him to take a break. That sun washed island in far off Belize would have been his ideal sanctuary.



**'Ted Rogers occasionally slowed down long enough to be called an incurable workaholic'**



ROGERS (above) at the controls of his first radio station, CHFI, and (below) meeting his idol John Diefenbaker

There was something of the mountaineer in Rogers' countenance, something about his eyes that had the permanent poached look of living on an abyss, and looking down too often. He was in so many ways a false extrovert. More characteristically, he was remote and private, an unquiet spirit who never made peace with himself. He was terminally baffled by his inability to find some form of exemption from the laws of cause and effect which taunted him, taking the edge off his triumphs.

If I could choose a final epitaph for that irreplaceable man, it would run something like this: when George Leigh Mallory, the first man to climb Mount Everest, was asked why he wanted to conquer the great mountain in 1924, he shrugged and famously replied, "Because it is there." Over 60 years later, on Sept. 29, 1988, when Stacey Allison became the first American woman to scale the great peak, and was asked the same question, she smiled and shot back, "*Because I'm here.*"

That reply could also have served Ted Rogers well. So much of what he accomplished was an offshoot of his physical presence. Being there, nurturing his business vision, taking a lead in any action that was in play, gambling on the future, being the token Texas-style entrepreneur in a Canadian sea of porridge-weaned WASPS who had been toilet-trained to believe that being careful was the ultimate virtue—those are his essential legacies.

He ended his autobiography, aptly titled *Relentless*, by offering this valid advice: "Throughout my life, my business drive has been to get my father's name back as a leader in communications. Most of my financial efforts have been to survive. Risky levels of debt were a consequence, not a choice. I am truly amazed how well it has turned out! If my life has a lesson for others, I think it is that everyone has a shot. Don't follow a dream, live it. No matter what it is you want, take your best shot. Be passionate and work hard, maybe harder than you ever dreamt, but the opportunity is there. You've got to be lucky at times and having a supportive spouse and solid family sure helps."

Too many Ted Rogerses would have made this country ungovernable, because ultimately they might have bankrupted or even maimed one another in the hunt for ever more daunting challenges. But we were immensely fortunate in having had one.

May Edward Samuel Rogers II rest in peace.

He sure deserves it. M

# Guts, foresight and Edward 'Ted' Rogers



STEVE MAICH

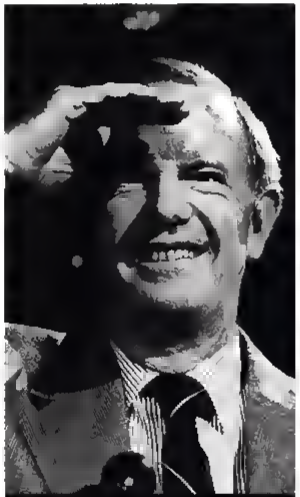
In business circles, calling somebody "a shooter" used to be a mark of high regard Shooters were gutsy, bold and willing to take risks that others would not. The term has fallen out of popular use in Canada, perhaps in part because we have so few true shooters anymore. These days our Titans tend, for the most part, to be low key strategists adept at protecting the franchise and building brands, but not overly concerned with conquering new ground or placing themselves at the forefront of emerging industries

Ted Rogers, CEO of Rogers Communications—the company that owns this magazine—died last week after a long struggle with heart problems. It would be tempting to say that Rogers was a shooter, but that wouldn't take the full measure of the man To put his achievements into perspective, it's best to turn to the words of an anonymous industry analyst who spoke about Rogers' amazing career in a profile for the *Financial Post*, back in 1989—when his greatest successes hadn't even yet been realized. "He pioneered FM radio, cable and cellular telephone in this country That's not just an accident," the analyst said. "Some one once said to me that Ted Rogers is a real shooter He's not a shooter; he's a marksman "

For many years there was a strange and unspoken reluctance in Canada to give the marksman his full due—as a businessman, a philanthropist and visionary Because he refused to bow and scrape before this country's traditional authorities, namely Ottawa and Bay Street, he tended to earn only grudging admiration. You sometimes got the sense people were waiting for him to fail, so they could condescendingly explain why it was inevitable all along

In other parts of the world, of course, a man who put his career and personal fortune on the line as many times as Rogers did would be regarded as a hero Here, we regard that kind of behaviour as erratic But Ted Rogers never seemed to mind the second-guessing, the doubters and the sniping In 2002, in the midst of a tough era for the Toronto Blue Jays, and with sports scribes howling over the team's lack of direction and chortling that his purchase was a dumb move, Rogers walked into the stadium press box one day and introduced himself to a *Toronto Star* columnist "Hi," he said cheerily "I'm the village idiot "

Perhaps it was because he knew what it's like to lose everything, and then to dedicate oneself to rebuilding, that he never lost that humility, and humour, and most of all that willingness to face a challenge head-on More than once, he loaded his companies and himself with so much debt that it threatened to collapse everything he'd built But he did so with an uncanny sense for the trends and demands that would shape the future of



**Ted believed that rewards flow from risk and hard work**

technology, and that foresight was always the company's saving grace In 1990, Rogers suggested to an interviewer for *Maclean's* that within 12 years more than half of the Canadian population would have mobile devices This was at a time when less than 10 per cent of the population owned one of the bulky and expensive cellular phones of the day The interviewer was incredulous "50 per cent will have a phone in their car you mean?" But Rogers was thinking bigger A lot bigger "I'm thinking of a personal mobile communications device It wouldn't always be in the car It could be the size [of a pen] You'd just talk into it; call the office, call home, no dial tone, voice activated. It can either ring or it shakes to tell you there's a call There'll be cellular phones, but there'll be a host of other mobile devices."

Twelve years later we were entering the age of iPods, Blackberries, GPS systems to guide your car, and wireless Internet browsers But that was far from his only prescient forecast In 1996 he explained to *Marketing* magazine, "We think that the high-speed computer service will be of the same magnitude as [cable TV or cellphones]. Rogers in the future will have as much business from computers in the home as it does from TV sets today" This from a man who rarely ever used a computer himself He just understood in his bones what communication was going to mean to the next generation, and he was ready to spend billions to ensure that when that future dawned, he'd be there to greet the sunrise. The bankers and analysts sometimes fretted and worried, but a couple of years ago, Rogers fulfilled yet another long-standing promise, earning investment-grade status on the company's bonds—the ultimate mark of approval for a well-managed corporation.

You could learn a lot from just listening to Ted Rogers speak. But you could learn even more by watching him operate, and much of what you'd see would challenge the conventional business wisdom of the day He believed that rewards flowed from risk, and in controlling your own destiny. As for "consensus building," he had no use for it "There's a danger to too much consensus," he said not long ago "The consensus is the common denominator and then there's no leadership The CEO has to make the final decision "

Did he get lucky? Sure he did. But perhaps more than any entrepreneur in this country's history, Ted Rogers was one who made his own good fortune, and his rivals knew it As one of them anonymously told the *Globe and Mail* back in 1989 "His accomplishments make the rest of us look absolutely pygmy-like. The whole trade has sat around for 25 years and said 'he's crazy, crazy, crazy' But he goes out and does it, and we're all embarrassed when he succeeds "

Over time, that embarrassment eventually gave way to deep admiration—as demonstrated by the dozens of glowing tributes that flowed in following his death. Ted Rogers used to sign off speeches and chance encounters by telling people "the best is yet to come " That wasn't just a folksy salutation. It was a promise he made to his employees, his customers and his shareholders. It was a promise he never failed to keep. M

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# STUDENT POWER!

## How Carleton council members made such a botch of things

BY ANNE KINGSTON • Procedural breakdown A government tone deaf to its public. Demonstrations by a usually apathetic electorate. Calls for the leader's ouster It's a familiar theme in Ottawa lately, both on Parliament Hill and up the Rideau at Carleton University where its student association, CUSA, sparked a national furor in late November by dropping Shinerama, its annual frosh week fundraiser for cystic fibrosis, in search of a more "broad reaching" charity

Media was alerted to the vote by Nick Bergamini, a third-year journalism student who was the only council member present to oppose the motion. He was savvy enough to know the press would seize on the false claim that cystic fibrosis "has been recently revealed to only affect white people, and primarily men," presented to buttress the assertion that orientation volunteers "should feel like their fundraising efforts serve their diverse communities "

Of course there was the predictable stampede to mock what appeared to be yet another case of political correctness run amok in academe *Globe and Mail* columnist Margaret Wente presumed, as did many, "that no one on the council had the brains to Google 'cystic fibrosis' " Such reasoning assumes, of course, that CUSA is a rational, democratic governing body, of which evidence is scant Indeed, council member Michael Monks *did* have the brains to Google "cystic fibrosis" and relayed from Wikipedia that the childhood degenerative genetic disease afflicts boys and girls of various ethnicities (there's even a photo of an African-American girl on the site). But CUSA rules don't allow a motion to be amended after it is proposed, says Monks So rather than redraft and excise the incorrect clause, council shifted discussion to the need to find a more "inclusive" charity

Was there proof students wanted a more "inclusive" charity? Well, not really "We don't question the student who brings the motion," CUSA president Brittany Smyth, a fourth-year part-time criminology student, told *Maclean's*. "It's just their own personal idea " That this "personal idea" was presented by Donnie Northrup, who represents science students, only added to the insanity

Nor had all council members surveyed constituents about whether they wanted to drop a 24-year campus tradition CUSA rules state that council members must receive meeting agendas 48 hours in advance But many hadn't (some blame the vice-president of internal affairs for not sending it out, others a campus email failure) Again, the vote could have been delayed but instead the council barrelled ahead, procedure and democracy be damned

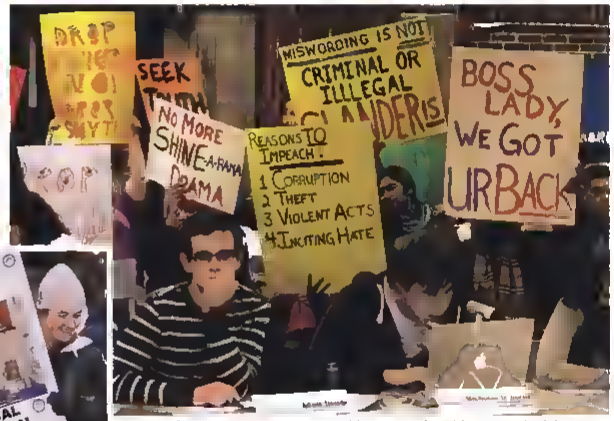
Whether that decision reveals a lack of brains, entrenched ruling class arrogance or both is up for debate CUSA is comprised of 25 unpaid councillors representing different faculties and six executives paid (after a raise this year) $30,150 annually Each has one vote, but the executive is understood to set the agenda with politically aspiring councillors following in lockstep

An apathetic electorate is cited as another contributing factor Last year, the CUSA executive, on which Smyth was vice-president of internal affairs, closed down its office in solidarity with striking campus workers, deny ing services to students while collecting their paycheques Yet voter turnout in the February 2008 election was a mere 15 per cent

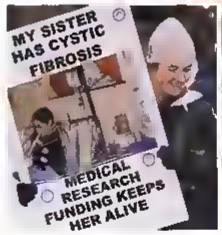
But becoming a national laughingstock has a way of stoking civic involvement Students mobilized on Facebook to reinstate Shinerama A petition circulated to impeach Northrup and Smyth Northrup tendered his resignation as did another council member at a student-packed Dec 1 meeting that reinstated Shinerama. As part of its ongoing *mea culpa* to the Canadian Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, CUSA raised the university's donation this year to at least $40,000

The debacle's nicest irony is that cystic fibrosis has been its biggest beneficiary "We've had a real outpouring of support and donations," says Kathleen Morrison, the foundation's CEO "It's been really positive I hope for Carleton it will be positive as well "

We'll see Smyth has apologized for any "offence" caused but is ignoring the call for her ouster Enough signatures have been gathered to initiate it, they're being authenticated before being brought to council, which may or may not forward a motion to remove her By then she will have served most of her one-year term, which ends in April "This has really woken up students," says Bergamini. "They have to take responsibility for their government." Too bad it always takes an indecorous *scandale* to figure that out M




CUSA MEETS to reconsidar its highly unpopular Shinerama decision




BRUNO SCHLUMBERGER/THE OTTAWA CITIZEN JULIE OLIVER/THE OTTAWA CITIZEN

BLACKBOARD JUNGLE

**KIDS RUN WILD...TEACHER TAKES THE RAP**

Concerned about out-of-control kids at inner-city schools in Leeds and London, British supply teacher Alex Dolan secretly produced a documentary on unruly students for the U K's Channel 4 Kids were shown threatening teachers, spraying deodorant, and brandishing a fire extinguisher like a weapon But instead of being thanked for exposing the problem, Dolan was recently charged with professional misconduct—and she may never teach again

# THE REAWAKENING OF CAPT. GREENE

**Trevor Greene not only survived an axe blow to the head, he lived to speak, move, write a book, and soon, marry. The story of a miracle wrapped in a love story.** BY KEN MACQUEEN



Canadian army Capt Trevor Greene is talking. Really, it's hard to overstate how amazing that is. He's sitting in the big easy chair in the den off the kitchen of the Nanaimo home he shares with his fiancée, Debbie Lepore, and their 3½-year-old daughter, Grace. The voice is quiet, for a big man of six foot four. The thoughts are clear and unflinching. Words are rationed, the sentences short, stripped of extraneous weight for their march across the wounded terrain of his brain. Like when he describes first meeting Debbie in 2001, at what he calls a Vancouver bar and she prefers to think of as a restaurant. They were with separate groups at separate tables. "I looked across the room," the infantryman says, "and she captured me." That says it all.

Lepore, smiling, arches an eyebrow at his hyperbole. "Across the room," she says, "wasn't it about five feet?" He shrugs. "It washer smile," he continues, "and her laugh." Whatever the distance, they've been closer ever since. Except for his deployment to Afghanistan, of course. She wasn't there on March 4, 2006, when the platoon he was part of visited the village of Shinkay, when they sat with a circle of village elders under the trees, in the shade by the river. It was his last memory of Afghanistan. The Canadians had their helmets off as a sign of respect. Greene's job was civilian military cooperation, to help villages in Canada's area of responsibility with access to clean water, medical facilities, electricity and schools.

The sad irony is, he was waging peace when 16-year-old Abdul Kareem stole up behind him, an axe hidden in his robes. He pulled it out in one fluid motion and with a cry of *"Allahu akbar"* (God is great) he buried the blade into the top of Greene's head, propelled by the sort of two-handed swing you'd use to split a log for the fire. Greene's eyes rolled back into his head; his blood, and, yes, some of his brain matter, spilled all over the Afghan ground. His brain was almost split in half, and yet he was breathing. Kareem reared back for another blow before three platoon members opened fire, killing him with a fusillade of bullets. Chaos reigned. The villagers fled, the platoon came under fire, medic Sean Marshall worked to staunch Greene's blood loss during a 40-minute wait for a rescue copter. An incredulous radio operator at the Kandahar base asked to repeat the type of injury. "I say again," responded platoon commander Kevin Schamuhn, "the nature of the wound is an axe to the head. Over."

By the time Debbie caught up with him, days later, he was in an American military hospital in Germany, in a coma, with much of his skull cut away to ease the pressure of his swelling, fractured brain. The prognosis was awful: the doctors said that if he didn't die, he would be in a coma; if not in a coma, then in a vegetative state.

They might know brains, but they don't know Trevor, thought Lepore, who has been at his side ever since. Greene's aim was to aid in the wartime reconstruction of Afghan villages. Lepore's goal is to aid in the wartime reconstruction of her fiance, and the father of their child—two near-impossible jobs.

Except here they are, almost three years later, Greene, 44, with a skull rebuilt with moulded composite plates, a full head of hair, and a brain that powers his thoughts, and his voice, and—with increasing success—his hands, arms and torso. "The recovery is like being frozen in a glacier and gradually warming up," he says. "First my left hand and my left arm warming up. Then my right arm. Then my neck, gradually my legs until I am all thawed out." Lepore laughs, surprised at the image. "I never heard that," she says, "but it's so true." Meantime, as the defrosting continues, he's learning Spanish, which will be his fourth language after English, French and Japanese. And he is writing a book along with Lepore, which isn't bad for someone whose brain was sectioned with an axe. The working title is *Growing My Soul. Capt Trevor Greene's Long Journey Home From Afghanistan*.



RICK MADONIK/TORONTO STAR PHOTOGRAPH BY BRIAN HOWELL

**DOCTORS** may know brains, says his fiancée/drill sergeant, but they don't know Trevor

It will be a "motivational book" about their lessons learned in overcoming adversity. He teetered on the brink of death several times only to plunge into deep depression. She was relentless, putting her career as a chartered accountant on hold for the one project that matters most. Even during his coma she'd tell him of the example he'll set for others, "to be able to struggle through it and to share your insights." The book, they say, is all about determination and the power of positive energy. Hearing them describe it, watching them together, you have to think there'll be magic in it, too. You feel it, even stronger later in the day when Grace, a blond bundle of fight, bounds into the house, wearing a necklace from preschool made with drinking straws and paper hearts. Medicine and motivation only take you so far. The reawakening of Capt Greene is a miracle wrapped in a love story.

**The axe attack** generated an initial flurry of media reports, but a fiercely protective Lepore ensured that the long road back happened largely out of the limelight. The exception—a beautiful exception—is the extraordinary access that Greene and Lepore granted to Sue Ridout, a Vancouver documentary film maker. By then, Greene, still largely immobile and capable of little more than yes or no responses, had spent a year at Vancouver General Hospital and was living in a private care home in suburban Langley. For 18 months Ridout and a camera crew documented his rehabilitation, much of it taking place at the highly regarded Halvar Jonson Centre for Brain Injury in small town Ponoka, Alta., south of Edmonton. The result is *Peace Warrior*, a chronicle of the road back, and a revealing window into the collateral damage of the attack on his platoon. The documentary airs Dec. 13 at 7 p.m., on CTV.

With months of recovery condensed into an hour of television, Greene seems to grow before your eyes, gaining weight, mobility and speech, with remarkable speed. In fact, it was "a marathon of baby steps," as the film notes. Until Greene and Lepore had an advance look at the documentary a day before a *Maclean's* reporter and photographer visited, there is much of those early days he simply didn't remember. He is pleased with the results, and believes it serves the purpose he intended. "I wanted people to know what it's like for Afghanistan veterans, what we went through," he says. "[Canadians] thought we were peacekeeping, and it was war. I wanted them to see the effects of war."

Ridout looks at two platoon members, Schamuhn and Sgt. Rob Dolson, who carried an unwarranted load of blame after the attack. Dolson, in particular, left the Afghan theatre early, agonizing over his failure to foresee the attack, though by all accounts he was the first to react. "I got up, took my weapon off safe, fired two rounds into him but he just stood there and stared at me. And it took another 10 more shots to drop him."

The cameras roll near the end of Greene's stay in Ponoka as a surgeon delivers the news that there's little likelihood he'll walk again, a prognosis they don't accept. The mood lightens moments later when, in a hospital hallway, there is an emotional reunion with Marshall, the medic, who last saw Greene when he bundled him onto the chopper some two years earlier. He tells Greene: "It had a huge impact on me, and the person I am today."

The cameras also record Greene's plunge into depression, during the Christmas period in Ponoka last year. At one bleak point Greene stares blankly ahead, his eyes devoid of hope. "I was supposed to die," he says.

**The day Lepore** first met Greene, she was struck by his gregarious nature, his patriotism, and his unusual degree of frankness. Lepore's table of co-workers was making plans to a move on to a bar in Kitsilano. Greene's group, he announced, was heading for No. 5 Orange, one of Vancouver's storied strip clubs. "I thought, if he's trying a pickup here, that's not the best line," says Lepore. "But that probably means he's really, really honest." In fact, Greene later made a command decision to avoid the strip club, showing up instead at the



## GREENE dreams of Afghanistan and of his assailant. 'We are friends.'

same bar as Lepore's group. They danced. They talked. She learned he was a journalist, both in Japan for Bloomberg News (where he wrote a book on Japan's homeless) and in Vancouver. He was celebrating this night, the completion of his book, *Bad Date, The Lost Girls of Vancouver's Low Track*—the first book written on the missing women of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. He told her he was also an officer in the Seaforth Highlanders, a Vancouver-based reserve infantry unit. His aim, he said, was to deploy to an overseas trouble spot, and to one day use that operational experience to join a United Nations aid agency, Compassionate, she thought. She'd never met an author or a soldier. "I was intrigued."

Grace was born by the time Greene got orders to deploy to Afghanistan, but that didn't change the equation. Lepore had known from the get-go this was his dream. "Even if I wasn't okay with it, I would never keep him from going." Besides, his job was to help Afghanistan rebuild—how dangerous could that be? "He always seems—what's the right word—invincible," says Lepore. "Just every thing seems to go well for him, so I never expected that anything would happen."

Greene knew better. To help the villages, you must get to the villages. During one such convoy their LAV III, a Canadian-made light-armoured troop carrier, bogged down in a river, stranding them under a full moon, a fat target for anyone with a rocket propelled grenade. They were lucky that time. Not so in February 2006 when a roadside improvised explosive device rocked the LAV that Greene was riding in. Most of the injuries to the 10 inside were cuts and bruises, but Greene was removed to Kandahar airfield hospital with a concussion. It was the first time military personnel delivered bad news to Lepore. The second time, a 6 a.m. knock on the door a month later, was worse.

Before Greene left for Afghanistan, he taped a number of videos for Grace, his dear little "wabbit." There were pictures of him drying her from the bath, pushing her in the stroller, singing the ABC song. "My life expanded," he says of her birth. "It was like a new chapter of a new book." Of the videos, he says with an infantryman's clear-eyed practicality: "I thought if I died they would be the only thing she'd have to remember me by." He also wrote and sealed a last letter to Lepore, "in case I got killed, in case something happened to me." After the axe attack, with his life hanging by a thread, she ripped open the letter and read its contents.

**The news** those early weeks and months was as bad as bad can get. The doctors in Vancouver took Lepore aside and told her the optimistic comments about recovery she'd made in a few early interviews were groundless. "He will not come out of his coma, and if he does, he will be a vegetable," she was told. Family friend Clare MacIntyre, who studied journalism with Greene at King's College in Halifax in the 1980s, recalls sitting with Debbie through meetings and hospital visits. "They're so in love and that I think is a huge part of his recovery. Debbie never, ever wavered in her belief that he would be fine," she says. "I remember going to one particularly grim meeting with Deb, at [Vancouver General]. I was there to take notes so she could concentrate on what was going on. It was really quite grim and I was really choked up. Debbie put her arm around me and said 'Are you going to be okay? They sure don't know him, do they?' " It was Lepore who first noticed he'd emerged from a coma, after several weeks in Vancouver. She was reading him a friend's letter and she saw his eyes following across the page.

Greene spent much of his time in the intensive care unit. He fought off two near-fatal bouts of pneumonia, and a failed initial attempt to rebuild his skull that nearly killed him. "Fortunately I wasn't cognizant at that time," he says, "or I would have freaked out." Lepore communicated with him initially through a code of eye blinks. She was spelled off by her family, and Greene's parents, Elizabeth and Richard Greene, a retired RCMP officer, who shuttled back and forth from their home in Nova Scotia.

Lepore, frustrated by "an extreme amount of doubt" from the medical establishment about Greene's prognosis, turned to alternative medicine. She's always believed in "the power of intention," that visualizing a result can often make it happen. She told a friend: "We've got to do something, we don't have a hope in hell here." The friend told her about a Vancouver-area distance healer, a young man who guards his real surname but calls himself Adam Dreamhealer. They went to his website, which includes advertisements for his books and workshops, and testimonials, including that of rocker Ronnie Hawkins, who credits Adam with helping him beat a terminal diagnosis of pancreatic cancer in 2003. Lepore wrote Adam an email, the subject line: "Canadian soldier injured in axe attack needs your help."

Adam, during an initial visit, saw in an unresponsive Greene "a white light. I don't know, I guess I could describe it as your connection to source, or God," says Lepore. "He could see that connections were there, there was still brain activity." His sessions, mostly done from afar, involve directing his energy. As he claims on his website, "with a focused intention to heal, and the power of energy, we all have the ability to heal ourselves."

Adam conducted a series of "distant energy" treatments, he told *Maclean's*. Lepore, who was with Greene in the intensive care unit, says "things seemed to be going on at the exact time of Adam's treatments, like eyes opening and closing, body movements, eyes moving." He performed a second treatment after doctors warned they might have to remove one of Greene's lungs. "The following day doctors then decided they didn't have to remove a lung," Adam says. "I continued with occasional treatments and told Debbie that improvements would continue, but slowly." Lepore credits Adam with a role in Greene's early path to recovery.

## 'MY LIFE expanded,' he says of Grace's birth, before he received orders to deploy



The couple has since employed many alternative therapies to complement medical care and established rehabilitation techniques. Among them: acupuncture, and reducing stress by manipulating the body's energy through reiki and craniosacral therapy. "The philosophy is when you go through a trauma like that it gets trapped in your body," she explains. "They have training to work with the fascia of the body to release those energy blockages."

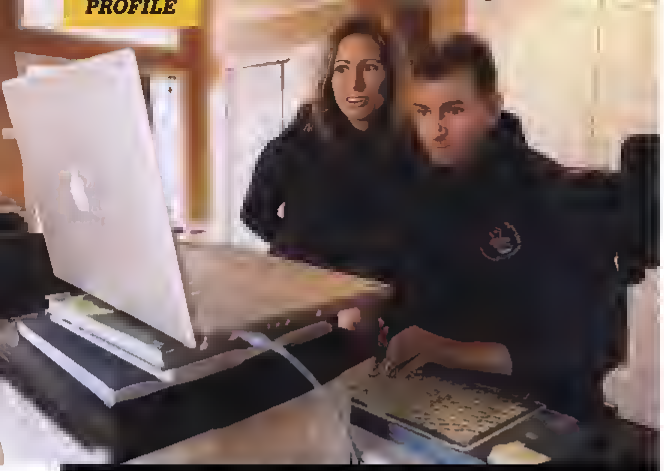
Such techniques, she knows, don't sit well with the medical establishment. She kept doctors on "a need-to-know basis," she says. "What's the expression—act now, ask for forgiveness later?" Adds Greene: "Forgiveness is easier to get than permission."

The medical establishment itself has gone through a major rethink about the brain, and its powers of adaptability and recovery. Dr. Shaun Gray, department chief of the rehabilitation centre in Ponoka where Greene spent 14 months, puts it this way: "We used to think of the brain as an organ that didn't really heal. The presumption was always if part of the brain was damaged that those neurons didn't regrow. It was like plucking a chip out of your computer—the functions of that chip were now gone and that was all there was to it," he says. While he wouldn't comment on Greene's specific case, he says the evidence now shows that with proper rehabilitation, and especially with a motivated, high-functioning individual, the brain can regenerate and rewire itself. "So, when a part that is responsible for a particular function is damaged, that capacity can be shifted to other parts of the brain."

Greene insists that during his rehab in Ponoka he could sense his brain was healing and compensating. "I've even felt it when I was studying Spanish online," he says. "I felt the neurons growing in my brain. It felt like a caterpillar crawling across the top of my skull." The actual limits of a brain's ability to recover are among the great unanswered questions, Gray says. "There are neuroscientists who suggest that we don't have the brain capacity to understand our own brains."

**Greene doesn't know** much about his attacker or his motivation, beyond news reports and the accounts of his platoon. "I know what his axe felt like on my head," he

PHOTOGRAPHS BY BRIAN HOWELL



**THREE years ago he wrote his 'last letter' to Lepore: 'Mourn me and move on'**

says. There are reports he was a deranged individual with no affiliation to the Taliban. His platoon mates, however, who were fired on immediately after the attack from positions across the river, call it an ambush. "I don't understand why he did it," says Greene. "I assume he was just an uneducated peasant, and young to boot, who fell under the sway of the Taliban, who are corrupting the word of their Quran. The Quran is all about compassion, mercy and integrity."

There is a part of *Peace Warrior*, early in his rehabilitation in Ponoka, where Ridout asks Greene what he dreams about. Afghanistan, the village meeting, and his assailant, he replies. "We are friends." The answer stunned Ridout and the film crew. "It was very moving. It was very unexpected," Ridout says. Asked today if he has forgiven his attacker, Greene stares out the window. "To move on I had to forgive him," he says. "It was self preservation." Later he returns to the subject. "I was engaged with the elders. He saw me as a Canadian spokesman and I was his target. He didn't know me. I didn't know him. Nothing personal there."

There are emotional as well as physical aspects to Greene's healing. His sporadic bouts of depression, which only lifted this February, were compounded by post-traumatic stress, or what the military now calls "operational stress injury" (OSI). He could not watch anything about Afghanistan on television, nor could he handle the sight of military uniforms. He describes a visit by a contingent led by his commanding officer. "They wore uniforms because they thought I would be comfortable," he says. "I was terrified." He took anti-anxiety medication and worked with a psychologist at the centre, as well as a new OSI unit created under former chief of defence staff Gen. Rick Hillier.

Both Greene and Lepore say they've had exceptional support from the Canadian Forces. Last Christmas in Ponoka they were given a specially equipped van that was jointly paid for by the Department of National Defence and the Military Casualty Support Foundation (MCFS), a new charity for injured veterans started by Ontario-based military contractor IMT. The van was the charity's first major donation, says Theresa Hacking, the founder and president of MCFS. "I was really happy we could do that," she says, "it makes such a difference in their lives."

Financing from DND and from a trust fund created by Greene's legion of friends has helped convert their Nanaimo home into a rehab centre. Technicians created what is essentially an elevated railroad, a lift that starts above their bed and can carry Greene right into the bath. A second hoist can move him from his easy chair into a wheelchair. His latest project, in fact, is gaining the ability to use a standard arm-propelled wheelchair, something that would have been unthinkable even a few months ago.

Much of the credit goes to Lepore, his drill sergeant, who helped convert the family garage into a gymnasium where Greene begins each day. There are weights, and a series of rubber bands hanging from the ceiling. Two wooden poles—equipped for traction at one end with a pair of Grace's rubber boots—are used to work his shoulders and arms, as is a bicycle-style hand crank. He wears for his workout the pair of military-issue black gloves he had in Afghanistan. Look closely and you notice the index finger on the right glove is cut away—his trigger finger.

That afternoon includes a tough session with occupational therapist Lela Mandziuk, assisted by Lepore and her stepfather, Bill Inglis. "This guy just doesn't quit," Inglis says in a quiet aside. "This lady," he says of Lepore, "has said, 'The word quit doesn't exist in our household.'" Greene is straining with an eight-pound dumbbell, additional weights strapped on his wrists. How does this compare to basic training, he is asked. "Easier," he grunts. Mandziuk's hands go to her hips. "I'm not impressed with that statement," she says. "After Christmas, the honeymoon is over."

**This holiday,** the first in their new home, is the brightest in a good long while. It will be marked here with a Christmas Eve celebration with much of Lepore's family, who live nearby. Greene is looking ahead to the completion of their book and a possible career as a motivational speaker. He's got other priorities, too. To get out of that chair. To get married. "To be a whole father for Grace, and a whole husband for Debbie, and to have more babies."

It was less than three years ago that Greene wrote his "last letter" to Lepore. It went something like this: "Mourn me and move on. Don't shackle yourself to a dead man. I died performing a mission I was proud of." It was just 2½ years ago that a doctor quietly advised Lepore to place Greene in a long-term care facility so he, and she, could get on with their lives. And it was a bleak day in Ponoka a year ago when he wondered aloud if he wasn't supposed to be dead.

Capt. Greene has come to realize a few things since then, now that the black dog of depression has slunk away and his arms can reach for the future. He didn't die, quite simply, because he was meant to live. And the soldier's mate didn't move on—and this he never doubted—because she isn't one for running away. M

PHOTOGRAPH BY BRIAN HOWELL

DAY IN THE SUN

**FORGET THE 1/4-POUNDER, TRY A 20-POUNDER**

A Pennsylvanian chef has earned the admiration of gluttons around the globe for being the first ever to finish a Beer Barrel Belly Bruiser. This meat monstrosity includes a 15-pound patty, buns, lettuce, tomatoes, cheese, onions, peppers, and a full cup—each—of mayonnaise, ketchup, mustard, and relish. Altogether, the burger weighs 20.2 pounds. Brad Sciullo took four hours and 39 minutes to eat it, winning $400 and three T-shirts for his efforts.



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MARK BLINCH/REUTERS

**A CANADIENS centennial exhibit at the Hockey Hall of Fame; vintage sweaters**

# TOASTÉ TO THE HABS

## Even the board game Monopoly is feting the Canadiens' 100th

BY NOAH RICHLER • Families of Montreal Canadiens fans can breathe a sigh of relief knowing that even in the club's centennial year they will not be called upon to purchase different hockey sweaters once a week so that their kids' and their heroes' jerseys match. This changing of what the English call a "kit" is the cynical measure European soccer clubs take to fleece their loyal supporters' wallets on a regular basis, but it is not one of the marketing tricks that the Habs' American owner, George Gillett Jr., has brought back from the United Kingdom subsequent to his purchase, in 2007, of a 50 per cent stake in Liverpool FC.

Still, as part of its celebrations of its 100th year, the club has reissued four vintage sweaters this season and has plans, next year, for three more—their pedigree proceeding backwards in time through the Habs' actual anniversary date of Dec. 4, 2009, the earliest jerseys sporting not the familiar CH, but the original CA—for "Club Athlétique."

The anniversary is a retail bonanza for the Habs' management, quadrupling the size of its Bell Centre shop to accommodate the sports gear, photographic mementoes, DVDs, books—and even an authorized special edition Montreal Canadiens Monopoly board game. Outside the Bell Centre, the new Centennial Plaza was unveiled last Thursday, a memorial square that includes life-size bronze statues of four Habs greats—Howie Morenz, Maurice Richard, Jean Beliveau and Guy Lafleur—as well as the engraved "messages of encouragement" of an eventual 20,000 fans.

Gillett and his son Foster, owners since 2001, have done a masterful job of restoring a fallen team that Montreal fans, ever the most discerning in hockey, had started to abandon and that even French-Canadian players were reluctant to join because of Quebec's language quagmire and a low Canadian dollar. The Gilletts have made a virtue out of the Bell Centre, a mediocre building that doesn't compare to Toronto's Air Canada Centre, making it welcome to families (in just one of the measures, kids 15 and under can sit in a 500-seat "FamilyZone" for $10, tax included), and building on the team's singular legacy by putting Guy Carbonneau and the great Bob Gainey, a couple of the best Canadiens of the last couple of decades, behind the bench and in the GM's office.

It is Gainey who has written the introduction to D'Arcy Jenish's *The Montreal Canadiens: 100 Years of Glory*, the dependable front-runner in the swath of centennial books coming fans' way. This is the club's history as written by an efficient New Jersey Devil rather than with the colour of say, a Guy Lafleur in his prime. There are few photographs. For visuals, look to *Honoured Canadiens*—a coffee table book produced by the Hockey Hall of Fame, or the much better souvenir, Mike Leonetti's *Canadiens Legends*, with its foreword by Jean Béliveau. A half-dozen French-Canadian titles as well as the NHL's DVD boxed set, *Memorable Games in Canadiens History*—including the 1975 Red Army game that, curiously, D'Arcy Jenish does not mention—round out the story-telling cornucopia.

And yet, at present, the Canadiens' new retail store does not stock the greatest story to ever have venerated the Habs, which is Roch Carrier's brilliant "The Hockey Sweater," later made by the NFB into a wonderful animated short. A pity, as the story is so known and loved.

And there's one other cherished item the Habs won't be selling, though I happen to know one still exists because of a fortuitous experience I had two years ago, when I took my wife and the kids to Montreal for the weekend.

"There are two kinds of hot dogs and we describe them by the buns," they had to listen to their tedious dad brag about one of the city's lesser-known meats. "The best *steames* are to be found on Saint Lawrence. But the best *toastes* we used to get at the Forum." That evening, at my family's local on Crescent Street, I was pointed to a fella called Foster Gillett who was drinking at the bar in the back. It was the night Bernie "Boom-Boom" Geoffrion's sweater had been retired. The player who claimed to have invented the slapshot had died earlier in the day and on my way to being loopily drunk—such was the emotion that not just I was feeling—I lectured the out-of-towner on the moral responsibility of owning the Canadiens and how the franchise ranked with the greats—the Yankees, Barcelona and Liverpool FC, etc. Gillett, however, was unfazed. Subsequently, he had the grace to invite my gang to a game against Boston and a few minutes into the first period he asked the girls if they wanted anything to eat.

"How about a *toaste*?" asked Nathalie.

"No, no," I said, embarrassed at my kid's impudence. "You can't get them anymore."

"Oh yes you can," said Gillett, putting a couple of hot dogs in their buns and slapping them down on a toaster in the corner of his private box. *It was the real thing.* A few of the machines had been salvaged by the team from the old Forum and he'd nabbed one.

The Habs, I knew then, were in good hands. M

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# Oh, Mrs. O

**The world is suddenly obsessed with Michelle Obama's every sartorial decision. And she, being no fool, knows it.** BY ANNE KINGSTON

fame

Michelle Obama is a woman of stunningly impressive accomplishments—degrees from Princeton and Harvard, a successful law career, two beautiful daughters. Plus there's a husband about to become the world's most powerful man who calls her "my rock." Yet her most significant influence is as a fashion icon—in other words, a mannequin. In the space of one year, Mrs. Obama has catapulted onto every best dressed list: in July, *Vanity Fair* dubbed her "commander in sheath," a reference to her fondness for form-fitting dresses that show off her toned triceps. Fashion blogs, most prominently the obsessive *mrs-o.org*, monitor her every sartorial decision. Mere hours after the Obamas sat down with Barbara Walters in November, the world knew the future first lady had been wearing a US$3,510 ivory raw silk sheath with hand embroidered ebony ros

**HER PENCHANT for purple signalled, if only subconsciously, her husband's message: the melding of red and blue states**

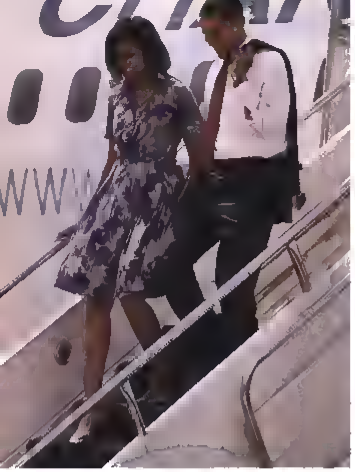
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ettes from the spring 2009 collection of the young American designer Jason Wu. Who she'll wear to the inauguration is a topic of fevered discussion. *Salon.com* stoked the public ardour last month with "First lady got back," an over-the-top piece celebrating Mrs. Obama's booty. "There's a definite hysteria," says Mandi Norwood, who hopes to capitalize on the mania with her forthcoming book, *Michelle Obama Style Guide*, a primer on the wide belts, bold brooches, vivid colours, florals, flats and fake gumball pearls that are the future first lady's fashion signatures.

Michelle Obama, no fool she, has figured out the powerful role clothing plays in telegraphing a political message. The fact she shows interest in fashion at all, beyond the safe society designers favoured by Washington matrons, reinforces Barack Obama's cred as a Beltway outsider attuned to the public mood. True to the Obama message, Mrs. O's style is more aspirational than material, and she's Exhibit A: a black woman from Chicago's South Side who's not a size 2 fashion model dictating American style.

True, she comes to the stage with natural advantages. At a fit, statuesque five foot 11, Obama wears clothes well. At age 44, she has figured out what suits her body. She's also the youngest first lady since Jacqueline Kennedy, with whom she's frequently compared, in part due to the classic ladylike suits and pearls she donned during the campaign's early days. Any invocation of the mythic era of Camelot, a conceit superimposed on JFK's presidency by his widow, was purely intentional. As André Leon Talley, an editor-at-large for *Vogue*, gushed to the *New York Times*: "A black Camelot moment is the right moment for the Obamas. And so the faux pearls, the A-line dresses, and the Jackie Kennedy flip are obviously all part of how her image strategy has evolved."

And strategic it has been, without the apparent aid of stylists. Yet there's no way Michelle Obama is combing through look books from the 2009 collections herself. Talley is rumoured to have an influence, which he has diplomatically denied. The high-end Chicago boutique



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Ikram is a resource. Another is Chicago's Maria Pinto, who designed the turquoise dress Obama wore for her speech at the Democratic convention. Obama began wearing Pinto's sleek clothes in 2004, the year her husband veered onto the political radar after giving the keynote speech at the party's national convention. There's speculation that Oprah Winfrey, a Pinto fan, made the introduction, which would add another layer to the talk-show queen's long term support.

During the campaign, Michelle Obama's clothing subtly reinforced her husband's political message. Her penchant for the colour purple signalled, if only subconsciously, the melding of red and blue states. In keeping with the promise of "change," she eschewed the fashion establishment, instead selecting up-and coming American designers of diverse racial backgrounds, among them Thakoon Panichgul, Jason Wu and Peter Soronen. Her confident, conservative yet playful look was greeted as a new template for female power dressing, a real-life working woman style that provided a fresh, welcome alternative to Hillary Clinton's parade of pantsuits.

Consistent with the campaign's call for inclusiveness, Obama's clothing was accessible to the mainstream. Pieces from the Gap and H&M were alternated with high end labels to create what Mary Tomer, the founder of *mrs-o org*, calls "fashion democracy." Though she often rocked $1,000 frocks, Obama sidestepped the charges of rich-bitch profligacy levelled at Cindy McCain, who favoured showy luxe Escada and Carolina Herrera. Amidst the flap over Sarah Palin's US$150,000 shopping spree, she scored political points appearing on *The Tonight Show* in a J. Crew outfit that cost US$305.99.

The next day, J. Crew's online traffic spiked 64 per cent. While her husband busies himself keeping the American banking and auto industries afloat, the first lady may be keeping its fashion industry going. Already she's an international contender: in Mrs. O, the *Times* of London recently opined, Carla Bruni, the ex-supermodel wife of France's President Nicolas Sarkozy, has "met her match."

That a black woman who doesn't conform to the entrenched Halle Berry-Beyoncé-Mariah Carey aesthetic of black female beauty could vanquish a white supermodel as a fashion icon is a breakthrough, says Janette Robinson-Flint, the director of the Los Angeles-based advocacy group Black Women for Wellness. "She's not an 'ambiguous' black woman," she says of Obama. "When one looks at her one doesn't see a person of mixed race. They don't have to make a decision, 'Is she black?' They see a dark-skinned black woman from the South Side of Chicago."

Traditionally, this image has been threatening, says Robinson-Flint, pointing to the purportedly ironic depiction of Michelle Obama as an angry Angela Davis-style radical with an Afro and a gun on the cover of *The New Yorker*. As the daughter of two working-class African American parents, Obama symbolizes the lineage of U.S. black history in the U.S. in a way her husband doesn't, says Robinson-Flint; "African Americans have been brutalized by racism in this country and that is something that Barack Obama [whose mother was white] does not carry as much as Michelle does."

When Michelle Obama commands the cover of *Vogue*'s March issue, as is rumoured, she'll be only one of slightly more than a dozen African-American women to have done so. Fashion remains an industry of racial stereotyping and exclusion. Zoe Whitley, a visiting lecturer at Sussex University who recently wrote her M.A. thesis about the representation of black models in *Vogue*, found repeated use of tribal and exotic tropes—models in animal prints or photographed crawling and leaping in the air.

Within the African American community, Michelle Obama's fit, pear-shaped body is itself viewed as a political weapon of change. In the *salon.com* article, Erin Aubry Kaplan writes: "I'm a black woman who never thought I'd see a powerful, beautiful female with a body like mine in the White House," adding: "Try as Michelle might to cover it with those Mamie Eisenhower skirts and sheath dresses meant to reassure mainstream voters, the butt would not be denied."

But to reassure those mainstream voters, Kaplan complained, the Obamas subliminated their black heritage: "Michelle's ethnic butt might have snuck under the radar, but an ethnic do wouldn't have stood a chance." Danielle Belton, whose Black Snob blog tracks Mrs. Obama's clothing, believes her ethnicity is more subtly conveyed in her choice of bright colours. "African-Americans love colour when it comes to fashion."

Obama's bold choices have occasionally misfired. The red and-black Narciso Rodriguez dress she wore on election night to anchor a carefully colour-coordinated family tableaux, for example, received more criticism than any of her husband's cabinet picks. *Slate.com* issued a finger wag: "Mrs. Obama, black with red is too jarring a color combination for a first lady. It's too dramatic."

Unbowed, Obama chose a variation on Nancy Reagan's favourite hue when she made a post election visit to the White House with her husband in November. Her coral Maria Pinto dress eclipsed Laura Bush's mousy brown outfit in every photo. The optics were clear: hold on, America, a more vibrant administration is coming. The subtext was stealthier: I'm the next first lady. I'm definitely not Nancy Reagan. And you're going to stop and pay attention. M

**Her real-life working-woman style was a welcome alternative to Hillary's parade of pantsuits**



MISBEHAVIN' **AMY WINEHOUSE SAYS 'YES'**

Troubled singer Amy Winehouse just couldn't say "no, no, no" to hubby Blake Fielder when he paid a conjugal visit to her hospital bed last week, according to British tab the *Sun*. Fielder reportedly visited Winehouse during his last night of freedom at the London Clinic before returning to jail to finish his sentence for assault and trial-fixing. Witnesses said, "It was obvious what went on." Winehouse has been in hospital since collapsing at home last month.

JOE RAEDLE/GETTY IMAGES



stage

BURNHAM'S COMEDY odyssey began two years ago when he posted a self-penned song on YouTube for the amusement of his brother

SUZANNE KREITER/BOSTON GLOBE/LANDOV

# Judd Apatow's latest discovery

## Comedian Bo Burnham, 18, is charming and offending his way up the Hollywood ranks

**BY LIANNE GEORGE** • When you're a 17-year-old Internet sensation with a potentially career-making opportunity to perform at the Montreal Just For Laughs Festival, there are certain acts you don't want to follow. Judd Apatow, Hollywood's reigning king of comedy, is probably one of them. Last summer, Bo Burnham, a young comic from Hamilton, Mass., found himself in this predicament—onstage, following an impromptu set by the director of *Knocked Up* and *The 40-year-old Virgin*. With Apatow watching in the wings, the lanky and baby faced Burnham took a seat at his keyboard, and launched into a set of musical musings on his usual subjects—painfully awkward teen sex, suburban gangster rap, and Bible camp hijinks—in his signature style: part Haley Joel Osment, part Dennis Leary. Afterwards, Apatow approached him for a meeting. "We talked about this idea I had for a movie," says Burnham. "He seemed to like it and he was like, 'all right, let's do it.'"

Burnham's implausible journey from small-town theatre geek to Hollywood up-and-comer began in late December 2006. Then a 16-year-old junior at an all-boys Catholic school, Burnham posted a video of himself singing a self-penned ditty, called *My Whole Family Thinks I'm Gay*, which he performed on a synthesizer in his bedroom (*Every time I go to dinner / It seems I'm getting a little bit thinner*). At the time, he was pretty sure his family did figure he was gay (he isn't). "Well, you know, I was doing theatre in eighth grade," he says. But he also understood the song was more broadly funny, because it was satirizing the hysteria surrounding the is-he-or-isn't-he of sexual orientation. "It was joking about things that kids would never joke about," he says. "Kids make fun of themselves for being skinny or weird or awkward, but never gay."

The song got picked up by a college site called *Break.com*, and went overnight from 8,000 hits to over a million. "That's when I was like, oh, okay," he says. He brushed up on his piano skills, taught himself to play guitar, and—wielding a precocious gift for cross-referential wordplay—penned a series of increasingly intricate and offensive songs, which he then performed and posted on YouTube. His ballad *The Perfect Woman* is a love song to the deaf and blind American author and activist Hellen Keller. *Klan KooKout* is a jaunty tune about a racists' picnic, sung with all the glee of a teen pastor. To date, he's had over 20 million views on YouTube.

Mostly, he describes his style as "an 18 year-old trying to be funny." But Burnham's concepts are at once sophomoric and wickedly clever: in *Rehab Center For Fictional Characters*, he sings all five parts in a conversation between Tony the Tiger (suffering from professional ennui), the Easter Bunny (a crack addict) and friends, about life's disappointments. The other part of his genius is his unhkelness as a conduit for the kind of cringe inducing humour that shocks people into re evaluating their assumptions—in the tradition of Sarah Silverman. He's also smart enough to know that his material won't always be funny. "I know how I'm perceived onstage and I play off that," he says. "But when I hit 25, 26, I won't be able to rely on that."

Now 18 and newly graduated (but still living with his parents), Burnham has a Beverly Hills agent, who also reps Dave Chapelle, an upcoming Comedy Central TV special, and a six song EP, called *Bo For Sho'*, currently the number two comedy album on iTunes, beating out Chris Rock and Jerry Seinfeld. In October, he became one of the youngest comics to headline in London's Leicester Square.

Most recently, he signed on with Universal Studios to write the script he pitched last summer to Apatow. The movie is a musical comedy—billed as an anti *High School Musical*. "It's not a parody," he says. "It's just my version—what a real high school musical would be." In his version, the Zac Efron character is named Bo, a none-too-subtle casting hint. Apatow is guiding Burnham through the writing process. "I don't know what all producers do, but Judd is very hands-on," he says. "I send him notes and he gives me feedback and all that stuff."

In his home town, his success has met with mixed reviews. "It always tends to be all the uptight white people, the ones who have caused all the problems in the first place, who are the first people to say, 'Oh don't say that!' Meanwhile, the gay black people in the back are laughing their asses off," he says, allowing for the requisite beat. "I'm not saying that all black people are gay." M



PERFORMANCE OF THE WEEK • **SAXY WALRUS**

It's amazing enough that Sara the Walrus can bring a saxophone up to her heavily whiskered muzzle with her massive flippers, so most viewers forgive the fact that her solo was pre-recorded. A feature attraction at Istanbul's newly opened Dolphinarium, this Milli Vanilli walrus is rapidly becoming a cult star. Led by her trainer, Sare also dresses up as a railway conductor and blows a whistle, as well as catching a rose. Goo goo g'joob.



THIS HERITAGE BREED has literally been flying—off the shelves. Demand is so high there have already been reports of turkey fraud.

# Why you'll want a Bronze turkey

## These caramel-fleshed specialty birds are getting high marks from Canadian chefs

BY PAMELA CUTHBERT • It's not your average tom. The Bronze turkey coming to market in time for the holiday season is the latest must-have for lovers of heirloom foods. Dark and robust, it doesn't look or taste like a Butterball. And with a price tag of $100 or more—or $17.50 a kilo at one butcher shop—neither does this hard-to-find fowl have much in common with an ordinary, buckshot-riddled wild turkey, which comes free of charge save a hunting licence and ammunition.

It took two years and some risk, but Cumbrae's butcher-shop owner Stephen Alexander in Toronto and Ontario farmers Emily and Scott Nieuwland felt certain these specialty birds could fly—off the shelf. They decided on the Bronze, a caramel-fleshed heritage breed, that, unlike its commercial brethren, mates naturally. Nieuwland recalls he first located eggs at a farm "someplace near Texas," but wanted something closer to home. Last year, he found Bronze poults, or baby birds, on an Albertan farm. "They flew red eye on WestJet," he recalls of the summer shipment. Nieuwland doesn't want to name his source. "It took a long time to find him and he's got a short supply," he says.

At about 3.5 kg to 8 kg, Alexander says of the Bronze, "It's closest in my mind to a game bird. Comparing the white [industry standard] turkey to the heritage one is like comparing a chicken to a pheasant."

Still a rarity in Canada, these alt turkeys are all the rage for seasonal shoppers at high-end stores such as Dean & DeLuca in New York. The fetish runs so high that selecting a turkey through an American website retailer requires clicking on the photo of the live bird of choice—and it's so successful an approach that in the days leading up to American Thanksgiving, the images are stamped "Out Of Stock." Humorist and foodie Nora Ephron wrote in 2005 that she was embarrassed to find herself out of the loop and without the *de rigueur* centrepiece for her Thanksgiving table. That was a few years after the launch of the American Heritage Turkey Project, which, in just seven years, has grown from a marginal operation selling about 600 birds to over 10,000 annually. In fact, they're so hot, there are already reports of fraud south of the border: cross-breeding of commercial lines with heritage stock.

Rare Breeds Canada, an organization dedicated to preserving and promoting traditional and often endangered livestock and poultry, lists about 50 producers raising heritage turkeys in Canada. "Very, very few of them are commercial. Maybe five," says turkey coordinator Margaret Thomson. On Vancouver Island, Stonecroft Farm raises flocks of about 700 of these birds, she estimates. The Nieuwlands have raised two flocks of about 500 each. (By comparison, Canadian turkey farms average 54,000 birds per farm.)

But in a world where convenience reigns so supreme that supermarket turkeys come in freezer-to-oven versions that are pre-stuffed—just heat and serve!—the heritage comes with a set of challenges beyond price. Splendido chef David Lee, cooking at home, tried his first Bronze turkey this Thanksgiving. "It was better than the regular turkey. It was more plump, more full-bodied," he says, adding a note of caution. "But there is more room to fail." He found it cooked quickly and needed a low oven temperature "so that all the juices were sealed in."

Cumbrae's Alexander agrees that education is key. "We had to really tell people that this was a different kind of bird. It would cook differently, eat differently." The bronze feathers, which are dark at the root, leave little pin marks on the skin. "I was blown away by these little black ink marks," he says. "That's how a turkey should look." But he got a lot of calls. "People complained, 'There are black marks on the turkey,' and we needed to let them know that it's normal."

In spite of hurdles, Nieuwland is confident the market will grow. With his flocks sold out this fall, he plans to expand for next. Ontario chef Stephen Treadwell has tasted the Bronze. "It's totally opposite of the water-chilled turkey," he says, adding that the price is higher but since these birds "don't shrink as much" the weight, after cooking, is higher. Although he wouldn't normally put turkey on the menu at his Port Dalhousie, Ont., restaurant, called Treadwell, he "would love to get some of these" from Cumbrae. But there aren't enough to go around. If Nieuwland's plans for expansion work out, Treadwell might get his wish next year. M



CATE GILLON/GETTY

**TODAY'S SPECIAL... SPACE BEER**

Fancy drinking among the stars? Japan's Sapporo Breweries has unveiled a new beer that's made from ingredients grown in space. Brewed using barley cultivated over five months in a Russian laboratory on the International Space Station, Space Barley beer is a 5.5 per cent intergalactic thirst-quencher. It's not sold commercially, but next month 30 couples will be selected through a lottery for a special tasting event in Tokyo.



FOR A SELECT FEW, GIFT-GIVING HAS ITS ISSUES




0920

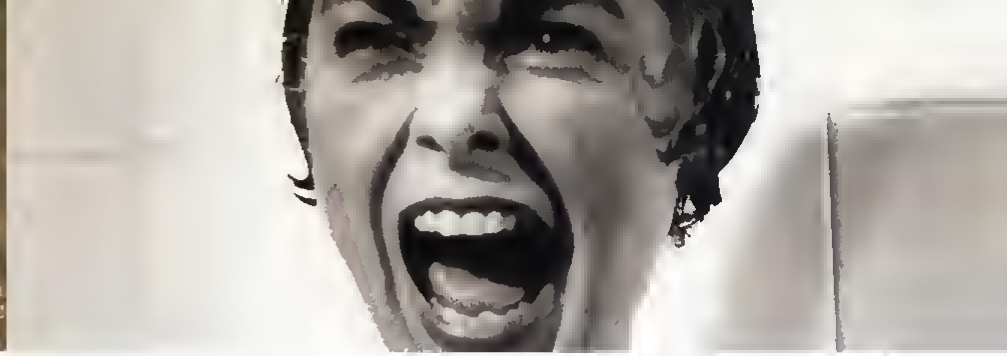
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ROGERS

MACLEAN'S
MAKE SENSE OF IT ALL.



TERRIERS, like the cairn, have been specifically bred to bark. In earlier times this alerted hunters to the location of a burrow



A YEAR AFTER Coren's wife gave him the puppy, she bought him a shotgun for Christmas. He was told there was a clear connection

# My wife. My dog Flint. The war.

## Joan had grown up with orderly, reliably predictable dogs. But this was a cairn terrier.

*Vancouver psychologist Stanley Coren is one of the world's leading experts on dog behaviour. In his latest book,* The Modern Dog, *an informal collection of anecdotes and reminiscences, Coren discusses how humans have bred dogs to particular ends over 14,000 years, instilling behaviour in them that often clashes with contemporary wishes, as Coren discovered personally. "Take the case of Joan and Flint," he writes. "Joan is my wife, and Flint was her gift to me."*

BY STANLEY COREN

Much of our bond with dogs comes from the fact that they are playful and uninhibited. We have actually bred playfulness into dogs by selecting for animals whose minds are much like those of wolf puppies all of their lives. It is their juvenile minds that makes dogs want to play and do the silly things that make us laugh. In humans the same behaviours would be evidence of a sense of humour.

As many owners will undoubtedly attest, though, playful dogs are not an unmitigated blessing. While such dogs are a joy to people who can handle the occasional bouts of chaos, they are an exasperation to those who cannot. Take the case of Joan and Flint. Joan is my wife, and Flint was her gift to me.

When I found myself without a dog for the first time in my life, Joan knew that I would go crazy if I didn't get one soon. She also knew that I had set my mind on a cairn terrier because they are extremely playful and make me laugh. When you spend your whole life in a research laboratory or at a keyboard writing, having a dog that makes you laugh is better for stress reduction than a psychotherapist. Joan announced that she was giving me a cairn puppy as a Christmas gift.

At that time he was only around three pounds of brown brindle fur. Named Flint, he would eventually become the number one cairn terrier in obedience competition in Canada. He would also grow up to own a large part of my heart and to be the bane of my wife's existence.

The following year my wife bought me a 12-gauge shotgun for Christmas. My daughter by marriage, Kari, assured me that there was a clear symbolic connection between the two Christmas gifts.

Flint was a constant trial for Joan, a prairie girl who had grown up in a family that kept large sporting dogs—mostly retrievers, pointers, and hounds. They were trained to pay attention, to do what they were told, and to work silently. These working dogs were allowed into the house only when they were to be fed or when the temperature dropped to something around minus 40 and everyone was feeling guilty about their welfare. Quiet, order, reliability, predictability, and unobtrusiveness are values that Joan cherishes in her own life and also demands from her dogs. A terrier as a house dog was something completely beyond her experience.

Joan had never encountered the likes of this dog before and was not amused by his favourite game, "The Barbarians are coming!" Flint played this game with great vigor at random intervals on carefully selected days and nights. It always began with him leaping into the air with a furious round of barking that was explosive enough to be heard throughout the entire house. Next he rushed to a door or window or leapt onto the highest surface he could reach, such as a bed or a sofa. His timing was such that the game always seemed to start when the house was quiet, because Joan was reading, sewing, or napping. Careful investigation would often reveal that the triggering event was usually something innocuous, like the wind brushing tree branches against the house.

To keep my wife from disemboweling Flint at such moments, I explained to her that terriers are specifically bred to bark. A working terrier absolutely must bark when it is the least bit excited or aroused because in earlier times this alerted the hunters to the location of the burrow where the dog had pursued an animal into its den. It was the sound of the barking underground that told the hunters where to dig to uncover the fox or badger. The earliest terriers, which were not so ready to bark, had to wear collars with bells on them to guide hunters in their chase and digging. Unfortunately, many terriers choked to death when their collars caught on some obstruction underground. Others died because the hunters could not hear the tinkle of bells when fox and terrier were lost under the ground in a final confrontation. A barking dog, however, could be heard, and hence found. My historical explanations were lost on Joan, especially when she had just been awoken two hours before the alarm clock was set to go off in the morning.

Flint had a mind of his own, and his likes and dislikes had no regard for Joan's preferred lifestyle. She would shoo him off a chair, only to see him immediately jump up on the sofa. She would push him off one side of the bed, only to have him jump back up on the other. She would scold him for barking at the door, only to have him jump up and begin barking at the window.

In the genes of every terrier is the ability and desire to eliminate rats and other vermin. People who have not had direct experience with this aspect of terrier behaviour tend to think that the most efficient rat killers are cats. While cats are certainly efficient at killing mice, where stealth and patience are the most important qualities for the hunt, rats are often too large and vicious for cats to handle; hence, terriers were bred for the job. The general method that terriers use to dispatch their prey involves grasping the rat or other small mammal by the neck and giving it one or two swift shakes to break its neck.

Cairn terriers are no different from other terriers in that their desire to chase vermin, whether rats, mice, rabbits, or squirrels, is built in. The simplest way to arouse Flint to a frenzy of activity was to shine a spot of light on the floor with a flashlight and then to move the spot erratically around. A small moving target automatically elicits the pursuit response in terriers, and Flint would chase the spot with undying enthusiasm. The game would usually come to an end only when I grew too tired to continue, or the flashlight batteries began to fail.

Flint was one of the few dogs that I have owned that spontaneously watched television. My spunky dog had first become interested when I turned the TV on to a program called *The Littlest Hobo*, a low-budget series that featured a German shepherd that wandered around the countryside, befriending various people and getting them out of trouble through his heroism and cleverness. When Flint saw this dog moving across the TV screen, his attention was immediately raptured. He would stand up on his hind legs, the way that he often did at the windows to watch other dogs go by. If the dog disappeared from the screen, he would get closer and look slantwise in the direction that the dog had gone, perhaps trying to catch a glimpse of the disappearing furry star. After that he would always check the TV screen as he passed.

None of this caused any problems until the attack of the giant rats. I no longer remember the name of the film being shown on TV that night, but I do remember some of the content. It involved scenes in which rats were occupying some abandoned structure. At his first sight of them, Flint froze. A low territorial growl started, and he began to quiver with excitement. When the rodent stampede occurred, with all of the accompanying frantic rat sounds, Flint could contain himself no longer. He launched himself off the sofa and attacked the wooden stand on which the television stood. Growling, barking, slashing, chewing—he desperately tried to grab hold of the table leg and shake it to death. In a matter of moments the wooden leg of the TV stand looked like it had gone through a war. Meanwhile the rat scene had drawn to a close. The squeals were now gone and no rodents were visible any longer on the face of the tube. Flint backed off and looked up. He snorted once or twice through his nose, then with tail erect and legs stiff, proudly walked out of the room, pausing only once to glance at the TV to make sure that his job of saving us from the onslaught of vermin was truly finished. I quickly rotated the TV table so that the damaged leg was against the far wall where the tooth marks would not be visible. I really didn't want to have to explain this new episode of genetically generated terrier behaviour to Joan. Over the next couple of days I secretly repaired the damage.

Flint's ability to hunt rodents did endear him to my wife for a while at least. He proved to be quite an efficient "varminting" dog. In his life he would kill rats, mice, moles, gophers, and even an opossum. Most of this was done out at our little farm that I often use when I am writing or just hiding from the world, especially during the summer. Flint's thinning of the rodent population meant that Joan's vegetable garden was more productive and there were fewer unwanted fur-bearing visitors trying to make their way into the house, garage, or cupboards where food was stored. His useful work was well appreciated by everyone in the house.

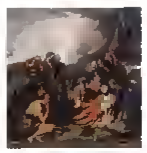
In the city, we live in an old house built around 1916. It is not sealed as well as it should be, especially around the basement area. Every year, as the autumn rains fall and the weather starts to turn cold, mice work their way inside. With a degree of patience and dedication that would make cat owners envious, Flint turned into a fabulous biological mousetrap. Joan was quite pleased with Flint's proficiency. She would warmly praise him for his efforts, giving him a friendly pat and maybe even a treat.

Perhaps Flint saw this as his opportunity to make amends, or perhaps he just reverted to being a terrier with a sense of humour. In any event, one morning Flint decided to make his peace offering to Joan. It was quite early, and Joan awakened to the gentle pressure of Flint's front paws resting on her. She looked down at him only to find that he had deposited a mouse on her chest—still warm, but quite dead. I fear that the gift was not accepted in the tender and accommodating spirit with which it was offered.

As with many terriers, Flint's motto was, "If two wrongs don't make a right, try three." M

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**FINALLY A BOOK ABOUT... ARMAGEDDON, 1759**

Almost 250 years ago, in an eight-minute span, a brief fight on the Plains of Abraham shaped the future of our continent. In *Northern Armageddon* (D&M), author Peter MacLeod presents a vivid, blow-by-blow account of that pivotal battle in Canadian history. As he notes, the bloody affair, which took place outside Quebec City on Sept. 13, 1759, helped determine the fate of North America's First Nations, and the future paths of Canada and the U.S.



'IT'S A FILM that is not about accants,' says Tom Cruisa. Thare are precadants for actors spaaking in their own accants, too. And yet.

# He always wanted to kill Hitler...

## But can a superstar with an American accent be believable as an officer of the Third Reich?

BY BRIAN D. JOHNSON • The last time I talked to Tom Cruise was seven years ago, when he breezed through Toronto on a publicity blitz for *Vanilla Sky*, a movie that flopped despite his best efforts. This week he was back in town to promote *Valkyrie*, another movie that needs all the help it can get. The blogosphere is already cackling over the trailer—which shows Cruise in a Nazi uniform and an eye patch declaring in a flatly American accent, "We have to kill Hitler."

The movie, directed by Bryan Singer (*X-Men, Superman Returns*) is better than the trailer would suggest. It's a fast-paced suspense thriller with a no-roaring narrative—the true story of Col. Claus von Stauffenberg, who masterminds a high-level conspiracy among Nazi officers to assassinate Hitler in 1944. But despite the eye patch and amputated hand, it's hard to get past the fact that you're watching Tom Cruise. Among the cast, only those playing the most vile Nazis, such as Hitler, have German accents. Nearly all the other German officers are played by Brits—including Kenneth Branagh, Tom Wilkinson and Bill Nighy—speaking with British accents. Among the principals, only Cruise speaks American. And it's distracting, as if Hollywood has found yet another way for America to win the war.

Interviewing Cruise is like talking to the most popular guy in school who suddenly wants to be your friend. It's hard not to like him, no matter what you think of his religion or his movies. He has charm to burn. "Good to see you again," he says, making me wonder if he remembers me or is just well-briefed. At 46, Cruise is still bursting with boyish energy, but his features look more gravely chiselled, almost gaunt. Dressed all in black with spotless white sneakers, he takes a seat on the couch. There will be no jumping.

Cruise talks about identifying with von Stauffenberg. "As a kid growing up, I think all of us wanted to kill Hitler—why didn't someone just pop him?" he says. And he talks about giving his daughter, Suri, a teddy bear with an eye patch so she could get used to seeing her dad in character on the set. Finally, asked about the accent, Cruise rolls out a stock answer. "It's a film that is not about accents. It's a film about the story. It takes place entirely in Germany. If we made it totally authentic to that time period, everybody would be speaking German." And there are strong precedents for having actors speak in their own accents, he adds, citing *Amadeus*, *The Sound of Music* and *Paths of Glory*. "That cinematic convention worked for the film."

In fact, *Valkyrie* begins with Cruise speaking German in a voice-over as von Stauffenberg writes treasonous thoughts in a tent in North Africa. Gradually his words morph into English. "To take the audience in," says Cruise, "we thought, okay we're going to start out in German, and then we're going to take the audience into the world of the movie."

While we've come to accept actors playing foreign roles in their own tongue, accents are always tricky. In period films, Brits tend to sound less contemporary than Americans. But what's essential is consistency. In *Amadeus* and *Paths of Glory*, American actors play German and French characters without affecting accents. But when everyone speaks American, at least they sound like they live in the same world. In the upcoming Holocaust movie *Defiance*, Daniel Craig erases his James Bond identity with an eastern European accent—a choice that's uniform among the cast. But in *Valkyrie*, it's hard to believe you're in Nazi Germany when you're watching a Yank commanding a conspiracy of Limeys.

Faking an inflection, of course, can be as dodgy as avoiding one. It's a hallmark of virtuosity for some actors, such as Meryl Streep, who never met an accent she didn't like. In *There Will Be Blood*, Daniel Day-Lewis cobbles together an arcane American dialect all his own. Kevin Costner's lame lilt in *Robin Hood. Prince of Thieves* fell so short it was laughable. And when Cruise attempted an Irish brogue in *Far and Away*, the title became a sad comment on just how close he came.

But perhaps the accent is only half the problem. Cruise seems so indelibly contemporary it's hard to buy him in a period role, never mind as Hitler's would-be assassin. So does being Tom Cruise get in the way of being believable as someone else? Is being a superstar an obstacle for an actor? "There are always obstacles," he says. "You're worrying, 'Is the story going to work?' You make choices, and you do the best you can." At least no one could accuse Cruise of not trying. M



**WE'RE STALKING... HENRY WINKLER**

Anyone over 40 can remember the Fonz jumping 14 garbage cans on his Harley in *Happy Days*. But actor Henry Winkler recently admitted to the U.K.'s *Daily Mail* that he suffered from such severe dyslexia that he had to fake every appearance on his bike. He says he also had trouble with numbers. "My parents thought I was stupid and lazy and used to call me 'Dumb Dog.' My father spoke 11 languages and knew how to insult me in every one of them."

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY ROBYN CUMMING

PHOTOGRAPH BY UNAART.COM



'IT'S NOT ABOUT FAT,' says ona woman who usad duct tape to tapa up her flabby arms. 'I've had bingo wings sinca I was a taanagar.'

# 'I waved and my arms waved back'

## A new product on the market is aimed at women who hate their flabby 'batwing' arms

BY JOANNE LATIMER • "Duct tape—that's what I used to tape up my arms," recalls Rose Hansdenberg, 49, a mother of four in Columbia, Md. "I made sure every outfit and piece of clothing hid my arms." Surprisingly, Hansdenberg is slender. At five foot ten, she's a size four with DD cups. "It's not about fat," she adds. "I've had bingo wings since I was a teenager. In my 20s, they were the reason I wasn't in my sister-in-law's wedding party, because I had to wear a dress with spaghetti straps. When I waved, my arms waved back."

Hansdenberg put down the duct tape this fall in favour of a new product on the market. Flabuless is a support garment for the upper arms. It launched in the U.S. in October and Rachael Ray has already gushed about it on her television show. An appearance on *Oprah* appears imminent.

Since Hollywood director Nora Ephron broke the taboo about neck waddle—writing a book about it in which she talks about hiding it in turtlenecks—the stage is set to obsess about another body issue: arm waddle. It's always been a cross to bear for Shelley Tillman, 29, who met Hansdenberg at a focus group for Flabuless in Columbia, where designer Lee Ann Stevenson created the new line of shapewear. "I had written off the top half of my body," says Tillman, a dog sitter who underwent gastric bypass surgery two years ago, dropping from 220 lb. to 175 lb. "I had to attract attention away from my arms and try to play up my neckline. Now I have more flexibility. We all want our arms to look like Madonna's, but how realistic is that?"

While it would be nice to have pipes like Linda Hamilton in *Terminator 2* or Angela Bassett, our skins' elasticity is a non-renewable resource. Even skinny arms can jiggle. With Flabuless, arms get the same kind of comfortable lift that breasts, thighs, tummies and bums get from Spanx. "What's next? Ankles and knees?" asks Marc Lafrance, an assistant professor of sociology at Concordia University. "We're rapidly running out of body parts to colonize and modify. The Spanx and Flabuless phenomena are symptoms of our mounting cultural anxiety around body image. I'm just afraid that we're vilifying older bodies, especially menopausal and post-menopausal females."

Well, if that's true, women are in on it. Spanx alone did US$350 million in retail sales in 2008 and there are more than a dozen thriving competitors in the shapewear industry. Barbara Paikin, the Canadian distributor of Spanx, sells to over 1,000 boutiques across the country. Her company, Only Accessories, has a hotline to handle the orders for over 100 Spanx products, including the famous Power Panties, bodysuits and camisoles.

Perceiving a hole in the shapewear market, Flabuless founder Stevenson targeted her efforts north of the midriff, on upper arms. "I was planning my wedding in 2005 and each of my bridesmaids had a different body type, but they *all* had arm issues," recalls Stevenson, 30, who comes from a family of fitness-focused women who cannot curb their arm waddle. "Then I gave birth to my son in 2007 and met so many women who complained about gaining weight on their upper arms. Shapewear is for women who don't have the time or inclination to spend two hours at the gym every day."

With prices starting at US$35, Flabuless is a lot cheaper than laser-enhanced liposuction or full brachioplasty surgery, which costs over $4,000 and leaves unsightly scars. Stylists are overjoyed. "About 80 per cent of our clients complain about their arms," reports Caroline Alexander, a stylist at Ludique, a busy Montreal fashion consulting company. "We're not the underwear police, but we encourage self-conscious clients to try shapewear. We're elated if Flabuless means clients don't have to worry about batwings under cashmere sweaters and jersey dresses."

Stylist Michael Schaeble, a panellist on *Naked Fashion*, is more cautious. Surfing *flabulessu.com* from his flat in London, he likens them to post-op bandages, calling them "hideous black arm girdles." They're "the fashion equivalent of mittens on a string," declares Schaeble. "I'm all for anything that gives you some structure, but they aren't stylish enough to work as a shrug yet. And do they only come in black and nude? For shame!" Right on cue, Flabuless is set to launch new colours and fancier shrugs to be worn over strapless dresses.

Now, if only someone would get working on those knee girdles. M



**MOST IMPROVED... BRITNEY SPEARS**

After a public meltdown and failed comeback attempt, 2009 is finally shaping up to be the year of the Britney. *Billboard* magazine estimates that her new album *Circus* (released last week) could top the charts and sell as many as 450,000 copies in its first week. The pop singer is currently on a whirlwind promotional tour, with A-level stops such as *Good Morning America*. If she can stay away from electric razors, this comeback could be for real.

THE END

# EUGENE ARTHUR FORWARD

1920-2008

## Drawn by the promise of adventure, he became a paratrooper who took part in the invasion of Italy

Eugene Arthur Forward was born on Nov. 23, 1920, in Montreal, the ninth of 10 children to factory labourer Hugh Forward and his homemaker wife, Helen. The family lived a modest existence in south Montreal until Eugene was nine years old. That year, his father died and the family fell on hard times. In the midst of the Great Depression, Eugene quit school in the sixth grade, and began delivering groceries for two dollars a week, at age 11. Later, he worked as a carpenter's assistant and finally, as an apprentice tool-and-die maker with the Marconi Co.



When Canada entered the Second World War, Eugene, like thousands of young Canadian men, was drawn by the promise of adventure and a bigger paycheque. He signed up with the Victoria Rifles of Canada in August 1940. In 1942, his life would change forever when he volunteered to join an elite, joint Canada-U.S. force of paratroopers. In Helena, Mont., the unit became known as the First Special Service Force, and trained in parachuting, mountain warfare and sabotage.

In 1943, the FSSF was sent to Italy, where the Allied invasion had bogged down in the mountains south of Rome. The Nazis were dug into fortified positions atop the mountains and were shredding Allied forces trying to advance up the valley below. The FSSF's job was to climb the mountains and defeat the Germans dug in on top. The first such mission came on the night of Dec. 3, 1943, on the towering ridge of Monte La Defensa. The troops climbed the sheer cliffs silently, in darkness and a cold drizzle. At daybreak, they attacked and won the summit, but 82 men were killed, and hundreds were wounded. In the weeks ahead, the FSSF helped drive German infantry from one hill after another through the winter of 1943-44.

In January, Eugene was one of five men sent ahead to "locate the enemy" on Monte Majo. "When somebody started shooting at you, you knew you'd located the enemy," Eugene explained to friends earlier this year. Near the top, Eugene suddenly found himself in a storm of machine gun fire. Three rounds slammed into his helmet, puncturing the steel. Metal shrapnel cut his forehead badly, but none of the bullets penetrated. Over the coming months, Eugene would survive being shot twice more—once in the back and once in the throat. But dozens of his close friends were not so lucky.

He was discharged from the army in May 1945, but life after the war was difficult. Back on the shop floor at Marconi, Eugene found the monotony and the pounding din of the machines impossible to take. He quit his job, and sank deeper into despair and drink. It was Margaret Hogg who pulled him out of it. "I had known her since school days and always liked her very, very much," Eugene once recalled. They married in 1946. Eugene was working as a construction worker and there wasn't much money. The two lived in a tiny cottage that hadn't been winterized. Eugene carried scrap wood home each night for heat. At one point, he became so desperate he hatched a plan to rob banks. Margaret put a stop to the idea, telling him she wouldn't share a home with a thief. Eugene never mentioned it again.

Within a year of the wedding they welcomed their first child, Bruce. Their daughter Maureen was born the following year. She was severely mentally handicapped, but they were determined to make her a full part of the family. Bruce still remembers the joy in his parents' eyes when Maureen took a few steps at the age of five. Eugene was a loving but tough father. He had finally built a home and a career, becoming a skilled builder and handyman, but he was haunted. He could never discuss the war. "For years I couldn't even look at a war movie without crying like a baby," he told friends.

In 1979, Eugene and Margaret, both heavy smokers, agreed to quit together. A month after smoking her last, Margaret was diagnosed with lung cancer and died within the year. Maureen had passed away a few years earlier, and Eugene found himself alone and depressed. He drank more, but only found real solace when he reached out to old friends from the FSSF, and began travelling to reunions and memorials. Slowly, Eugene found the ability to talk about those years, and the friends he lost.

In May, a group of 35 children and grandchildren of FSSF vets returned to the hills south of Rome to pay their respects to those who didn't return, and Eugene was the lone veteran to make the trip. He returned to the foot of Defensa, and Majo and Sammucro—the places where he'd nearly been killed and lost so many friends—and told stories of the war. He confessed that he wasn't feeling well, but he was glad he'd gone, to see what peace had done for the hell he left behind. Soon after returning home, he was diagnosed with liver cancer and kidney failure. "I'm not afraid to die," he told the doctors. On Nov. 8, 2008, Eugene Forward passed away in hospital, two weeks shy of his 88th birthday.

BY STEVE MAICH

ILLUSTRATION BY MARIAN BANTJES

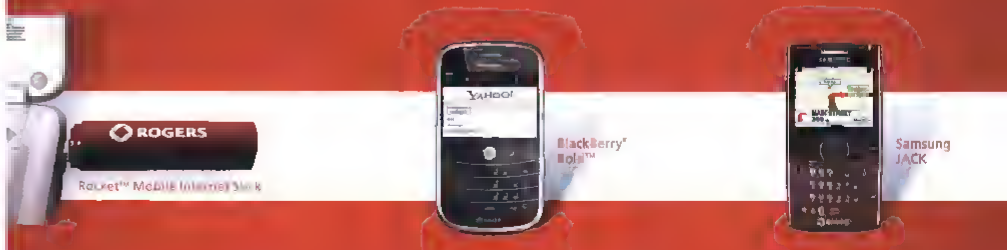


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